

Name of Principle Investigator: Bidhan Chandra

Project Title: Cross-Cultural Experiential Learning Evaluation Project

1. Please consider the original timeline and deliverable targets. How is your project progressing compared with the original estimates?

We have met most of our original targets, though the timing was a little later than originally conceived and planned. All necessary elements of the Evaluation Toolkit have been developed (such as Super Rubrics, Faculty Guide, Student Guide, E-Portfolio Training materials, Pre/Post Student Survey Questionnaire). However, we were able to finish all of these products/deliverables by the beginning of the Spring 2014 semester only, rather than by mid-Fall 2013 semester. Since we could not develop these before the start of the spring 2014 semester, we spoke with individual team members on an as-needed basis to clarify the products/processes, rather than hosting a Fall training session.

The project team is assessing and monitoring the work very closely and hopes for a timely completion of the project. However, if needed, we will be requesting SUNY IITG administrators for a 3-4 month extension to fully complete the project as originally planned and achieve the project goals.

2. How is spending progressing when compared with the original budget estimates?

Spending in the PSR and travel categories (such as non-technology-related budget items) is progressing as planned. However, we have found that we do not need some of the technology (hardware and software) purchases as originally requested, so we are not purchasing all of the equipment and software/apps. We also expect to increase some expenses on the PSR side. However, we are certain that we will stay within the overall budget and grant amount.

3. Please provide feedback regarding your experience with the project execution. In particular, any issues or roadblocks you've encountered that may have been unexpected.

One of the major roadblocks has been timing. Our original time estimates were quite ambitious and our inability to meet all of them has certainly impacted our project, particularly the lack of a professional training day for the faculty members involved. We have provided plenty of online training and have scheduled phone calls with individual faculty members to help them. The project would have benefited from a meeting with all the pilot faculty, which unfortunately was not able to occur because of reasons beyond our control.

Another challenge was the IRB approval process involving multiple SUNY campuses involved in the project. A lot of time was spent trying to figure out how to do this, which could have been spent in other ways. Providing detailed guidance to future grantees on the IRB process would be very beneficial.

4. What are your positive observations or pleasant surprises about your team's interaction or project process that might would be helpful to other PI's?

Probably the most positive aspect of the project work so far has been the collegiality and collaboration between and dedication of team members from six SUNY campuses involved in the project. Also, the support from each campus has been enormous. One of the pleasant surprises was the level of enthusiasm shown by conference participants during our presentation at the COIL 2014 conference about the value of this toolkit and request for sharing of the materials we have developed so far.

5. Please describe any challenges you've encountered working with your project team that you've found solutions for that might be helpful to other PI's.

One significant challenge during the first stage of the project was change of the PI as a result of her accepting a new job offer at a non-SUNY institution. As mentioned above, some of the other challenges were because of involvement of team members from six campuses in the project. Thus, coordination needed a lot more time than initially planned. There was also some significant confusion and delay about the main IRB approval process and associated umbrella IRB sub-processes for participating campus. Our multi-campus involvement also created a need for reliance on virtual communication instead of more face-face meetings which would have been more effective. Time commitment from team members was another challenge because of work load issues and other priorities in individual campus.