Background and explanation of the innovation: recap of your proposal/innovation (to include the issue/impetus for requesting)

ULAC proposed an education and outreach program to increase system-wide knowledge about open educational resources (OER) and strategies for addressing the high cost of textbooks and resulting lack of access by students. Successful textbook affordability programs were already underway at four institutions (ECU, NCSU, UNC Charlotte, and UNC Greensboro), but it was clear from conversations with colleagues that many librarians and faculty at other UNC campuses were not familiar with the problem or potential solutions. Thus, education and capacity-building were key outcomes for this AIMS proposal.

Barriers to student access and college affordability associated with the cost of textbooks were the impetus for our proposal. The cost of textbooks has risen fifteen fold since 1970. Since 2006, the cost of a college textbook increased by 73% - more than four times the rate of inflation. Studies indicate that students in the United States spend over $1,000 a year on course materials, collectively more than $3 billion per year. A 2016 study in Florida indicated that two-thirds of students do not buy required textbooks, greatly hindering their success in the classroom.

58% of 2016 graduates from NC’s public & nonprofit 4-year colleges borrowed money to get through college. The average debt was $25,562. While textbooks are not the highest cost leading to affordability problems, it is an issue that librarians and faculty can address. Furthermore, textbooks and other classroom resources have a special impact on the academic success of students. There are myriad low-cost or free high-quality online resources available that provide excellent learning experiences for students. Libraries around the country, including several in North Carolina, have worked with their faculty to implement these resources in courses.

Thanks to the AIMS grant, we have built capacity for textbook affordability initiatives across the system and laid a strong foundation for UNC to take additional steps to reduce the costs of textbooks and help make education more affordable and accessible for our students.
Project goals

- Provide **training** for UNC librarians and faculty to gain a baseline of knowledge about the advantages and impact of Open Educational Resources and best practices for implementing them
- Provide **resources** for developing and adopting OER
- **Promote the use** of OER among UNC campuses
- **Begin implementation** of OER throughout the system

Implementation: what did you do, to include any changes from the proposal

Training:

- Joined the Open Textbook Network (OTN). Membership includes an introductory workshop at a location in North Carolina, training for selected librarians at the OTN Summer Institute in Minneapolis, access to extensive resources and expertise, and establishing a stipend program for UNC faculty who review materials in the Open Textbook Library.
- Provided two statewide workshops organized by ULAC’s Educational Resources Affordability Committee:
  - **Enhancing Student Success: Developing Alternative Textbooks & Resources Workshop**, May 19, 2017 at NCSU’s Hunt Library. 70 faculty, librarians, student success specialists, instructional designers attended from 15 institutions.
  - **Open Textbook Network Introductory Workshop**, May 24, 2017 also at Hunt Library. Each institution was asked to send two representatives; there were 30 registrants from 12 institutions.
- Five librarians attended the OTN Summer Institute and received in-depth training in preparation for conducting regional workshops. They also developed strategies for open textbook programming, building community, and using new tools for OER efficacy and evaluation. A librarian who had previously been trained as well as the ECU library director joined these librarians at the OTN Summit.
- Four regional **Train the Trainer** workshops were held (Asheville, Elizabeth City, NCCU, Pembroke) during the fall semester 2017.
- Seven libraries subsequently offered campus workshops for their faculty with several more scheduled for spring 2018.
- 29 faculty reviews of Open Textbook Library titles have been completed and submitted to OTN as of December 18, 2017. These faculty have received stipends of $200 each
Changes from the Proposal:

We were not able to record the workshops at the Hunt Library. However, speakers’ slide decks are available.

Resources created and shared:

- Open Educational Resources LibGuide [http://libguides.ecu.edu/ulac/OER] includes *UNC Charlotte Students on Textbook Costs* video, links to active UNC OER programs, workshop schedules, and more
- Open Science Framework: [https://osf.io/b942e](https://osf.io/b942e) [speaker presentations from May 19 workshop]
- Google Documents: [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B3M-UI2fGg20UFRKb3NQbWFSVnc](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B3M-UI2fGg20UFRKb3NQbWFSVnc) [OTN Summer Institute notes and slide decks]
- AFFORD-TEXTS-L listserv created & in use so that librarians and faculty may communicate and share information
- Customized slide decks and publicity materials used at campus OTN training sessions

Results: what did you find out, and how did it impact students?

Workshop evaluations indicated that the goals of increasing knowledge about the advantages and impact of OER and best practices for implementing them among participants were met. Attendees suggested that more campus awareness was needed as well as more sharing of local textbook affordability programs and advice on how to bring campus partners together to provide pedagogical support to faculty.

Our implementation was not intended to impact students directly. However, they will be impacted as faculty move forward to adopt or create alternative textbooks. Students at the four institutions with textbook affordability programs already underway have been impacted through cost-savings, anytime anywhere access to online course materials, and more engaging and up-to-date content. For example, a faculty stipend program at UNC Greensboro in fall 2015 resulted in an ROI of $204,470 due to adoption of open resources. At ECU, class averages were compared before and after alternative texts were adopted by eight professors. The class average for sections taught with the traditional text was 2.95, and was 2.99 for those taught with the alternative text.

Scalability: could your effort be scaled to a larger effort/impact?

A centralized, state-wide approach to textbook affordability is the most efficient and effective means to reduce textbook costs for North Carolina students. Other state programs such as Affordable Learning Georgia and Open Louisiana have saved their students millions of dollars.
Next steps for North Carolina could include:

- Identification of the 100 highest enrollment UNC courses and of any currently-available open textbooks for these courses; coordinated faculty evaluation of these textbooks for potential adoption. Affordable Learning Georgia tracks that state’s top 100 undergraduate courses, suggests an OER if one is available, and indicates whether textbook development is underway through its grant program. Affordable Learning Louisiana has a similar list. ULAC can assist by creating the UNC list and keeping it updated. Potentially, this program could have an even greater reach and impact if it was extended to the North Carolina Community College System and private colleges. A partnership with NC LIVE is one possible approach for expanding the program. As an example of potential cost savings, UNCG adopted an open text costing $120 for 278 students enrolled in five sections of Math 112 in fall 2017. It replaced a print text costing $120, resulting in total savings of $33,000 for the students.

- Funds from UNC for faculty release time to create new OER or adapt existing ones and to publish the materials. UNC could manage this via a Request for Proposals with defined criteria. Affordable Learning Georgia has a mature Textbook Transformation Grant program with differential funding based on complexity and enrollment. Affordable Learning Louisiana estimates that creation of a peer-reviewed open textbook costs between $10-15,000.

- UNC purchase of course adopted e-books to use on multiple campuses. The return on investment for course-adopted e-books on individual UNC campuses has been as high as 40 to 1. Affordable Learning Louisiana allocated $145,000 to a similar program which resulted in potential student savings of more than $1,000,000 over two years. ULAC can assist by identifying course-adopted e-books that are available for purchase, negotiating with publishers, and making the e-books available at each institution.

- Conduct a survey of UNC students on textbook purchasing behaviors and outcomes.

Limitations: of your test run and/or on scaling up

- Not every UNC campus was able to send representatives to the May workshops or to the regional OTN workshops.

- Faculty generally have the freedom and authority to select the textbooks they use. In some instances, the decision is made at the department or program level. Therefore, faculty buy-in is critical to the success of textbook affordability programs.

- In mid-December, Babson Survey Research Group released results of its latest faculty survey on the role of OER. Opening the Textbook: Educational Resources in U.S. Higher Education, 2017 found steady year-to-year improvement in awareness and adoption while also noting concerns such as the effort needed to find and evaluate suitable material. The survey results were covered in the Chronicle of Higher Education and Inside Higher Ed.

Budget: in a graph (or even an appendix), please detail how you spent the money provided by GA
## Fund Expenditures

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>Open Textbook Membership</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTN account to be used for payments to UNC faculty for workshop attendance and subsequent submission of a review of an OTL textbook (payments administered by OTN)</td>
<td>$17,750</td>
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<td><strong>Total received from AIMS grant</strong></td>
<td><strong>$32,750</strong></td>
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## Matching funds from UNC Institutions

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<tr>
<td>Cost of travel to workshops at Hunt Library, NCSU, Raleigh, NC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hunt Library space</td>
<td>$750</td>
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<td>230 hours staff time for training, organizing and conducting workshops, managing program, and developing online materials @ $30/hour</td>
<td>$6,900</td>
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<td>May 19 workshop lunch</td>
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<td>May 24 workshop breakfast &amp; lunch</td>
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