Proposal for the Implementation and Continuing Utilization of Tk20 for Tracking Student Achievement of Institutional Mission, Goals and Objectives

Greenville College, Greenville, IL  62246
Prepared by Kathy Taylor, Suzanne Walker, and Susan Hughey-Rasler

Introduction

Tk20 is a comprehensive software system designed for use in academic institutions that seek to track student growth and change across four years of college life. The system provides for the integration of admission data, registration and course planning, advising, department and institutional benchmarks, and student portfolio compilation and evaluation. The assessment process at Greenville College, approved through the re-accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission in 2005-2006, is designed in a manner that encourages students toward the production of a portfolio of best works. The implementation of portfolio evaluation across all departments has been difficult due to the absence of easily assessable software platforms. Tk20 provides a solution that would greatly facilitate a higher level of efficiency in student outcome evaluation and tracking across all Schools and academic departments within Greenville College.

History of Project at Greenville College

As early as 1998-99, faculty and administrators at Greenville College worked collaboratively to develop a proposal for a student portfolio system that would include departmental and institutional assessment capability. The doctoral dissertation project of Vice-President Norm Hall provided such a comprehensive system. Funding for the development and implementation of this system, PRIISM, was not able to be accomplished in the years following the completion of his dissertation, although numerous other institutions, notably Taylor University, benefited from the conceptualization and thorough design formulated by Dr. Hall.

Following the re-accreditation of the College in 2005-2006, by the Higher Learning Commission, several departments, most notably Education, engaged in research to find a system that would be more user friendly and comprehensive than the TESTS, PACE, Blackboard, Jenzebar, and LiveText options that were utilized through the ISBE and HLC reviews.

In 2007-2008, Kathy Taylor and Suzanne Walker investigated Tk20 and presented it to Dr. Hall and other key administrators. In the spring 2008 Board of Trustees meeting, Dr. Hall presented a white paper outlining the value of such a software system and specifically featured Tk20 in his description. One of the Board members responded by donating $10,000 toward the education and training needed to implement Tk20. Kathy and Suzanne attended a training session and later in the fall, 2008, Buhpi Bhasin, President of Tk20, came to Greenville College to present the program to a larger group of faculty. Will Boyd, Deloy Cole, Steve Ross, Richard Huston and others were included in this presentation. In November, 2008, a group of interested faculty and administrators visited William Woods College in order to see first-hand how the system operated in an institution with a mission similar to that of Greenville College. In January 2009, Deloy Cole, Rick McPeak, and Norm Hall attended another Tk20 training program in Arizona.

Dr. Hall continued conversations with faculty and administrators who had central roles in the success of the General Education program. He expressed interest in finding a faculty member to serve as a Tk20 coordinator and possible trainer for freshmen students in the CORE program. Kathy Taylor, Suzanne Walker, and Susan Hughey-Rasler examined options for a timeline of
implementation, discussed numerous factors that would contribute to or deter from the process of faculty training, and together outlined a proposal for introducing the project to potential funding sources.

**National Perspective**

Research undertaken by Dr. Hall across the past decade underscores the need for a comprehensive software platform that is both robust in its ability to track student achievement of institutional goals and objectives, and easy enough to use that all faculty will be able to align syllabi, course objectives, rubrics for assignments in such a way that the overall efficiency and accuracy of student outcome evaluation will improve.

In the Midwest, IUPUI is an exemplar of a large multi-faceted institution that has been able to make major improvements in curriculum and course offerings as a result of the early implementation of a comprehensive portfolio evaluation system. Numerous articles in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* report the significance of portfolio and integrated course planning systems in the ability of institutions to prove to their constituents in the general public that they are, indeed, fulfilling the diverse goals and objectives set forth in their founding documents. Smaller, private liberal arts colleges and universities that have improved as a result of integrated systems of this kind are achieving recognition through the Malcolm Baldrige Award. In Illinois institutions must first meet the criteria for excellence outlined by the Lincoln Foundation. These criteria include, “systemic, well ordered, repeatable approaches.” Evaluation must include improvement and sharing in order for the organization to gain maturity. Approaches that are integrated must include, “harmonization of plans, processes, information, resource decisions, actions, results and analyses to support key organization-wide goals.” ([www.lincolnawarded.org](http://www.lincolnawarded.org) website)

Within the decade of re-accreditation 2005-2006 to 2015-2016, Greenville College will need to demonstrate flexibility, 21st century technological sophistication, and uncompromising attention to detail in the manner in which “transformed lives for character and service” is measured and evaluated.

**Rationale**

The primary reasons for implementing a program at this time involve accreditation, financial stability, and the need for efficiency in paring down infrastructure supports that are outdated and inadequate.

The School of Education is required to have a system of his kind in place by fall 2009 with the ability to generate reports by the close of 2010. The Illinois Board of Higher Education not only requires the full integration of institutional, departmental, and course objectives with course embedded assignments of student progress, but requires that the rubrics used to evaluate those assignments be standardized across all programs. The current utilization of PACE, TESTS, and LiveText within the Education Department would be replaced by a single system, Tk20. All incoming faculty within the traditional program as well as adjuncts in the off-campus sites would receive the same training in how to write syllabi, set up course assignments, and develop rubrics for the assessment of their courses.

The School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Professional Studies will be required by the Higher Learning Commission to show evidence of student achievement of program goals
and objectives through course embedded assignments across all departments and programs by 2015. While all departments have a framework for doing this at the present time and some departments have a well-developed system of portfolio evaluation, there is no consistency or efficient way of evaluating portfolios across all programs in order to determine if institutional goals and objectives have been met.

Student recruitment and retention is a key to sustained financial viability. The Tk20 portfolio system would enable students who are considering Greenville College to view selected examples of student achievement. The varied collections of off-campus learning experiences, cross-cultural immersion, volunteer projects in the community, job shadowing and career practicum experiences become windows into the life of growth offered at Greenville College. For students who remain enrolled, Tk20 provides an ongoing compilation of their journey, its peak experiences and challenges, with reflections, deepening insight and identity development as the senior year approaches.

Faculty already overburdened with course responsibility, higher numbers of students, advising, and committee appointments, are at differing levels of proficiency and willingness to utilize course management technology. Tk20 standardizes the process of writing syllabi, formulating rubrics to measure course assignments, and gathering student outcome data for periodic evaluative reports. Although their motivation to learn a new course management system might be low at the present time, faculty are frustrated with the inefficiencies of Blackboard and realize that an integrated system like Tk20 would, in the long run, provide them more course development resources than what they have had previously. Moreover, the system would be stable over the next five to seven years, a feature that was not true for Blackboard.

Potential Timeline for Implementation

**Spring Semester, 2009**

**Acquisition**

Contractual arrangement with Tk20 determined and initial fees paid. Education Department aligns departmental and institutional objectives for input into the Tk20 system.

**Training**

A minimum of two Education administrators and two faculty leaders from other schools take part in initial training. (for example, this could include but not be limited to the Dean of Educational programs, Core Program Director, Director of Assessment, and Director of Digital Media)

**Expected Outcome**

Education department outcomes, rubrics and course syllabi are ready to be loaded into the Tk20 system.

**Summer Term, 2009**

**Implementation**

Tk20 specialists on campus to load School of Education data (June). Education faculty and UTEP adjuncts train for Tk20 (July-August).

**Training**

Training of selected Core faculty and selected academic department heads who will serve as trainers for other faculty in
the future. Director of Assessment works with faculty departments to prepare program and course objectives for Tk20.

**Expected Outcome**  
Training modules integrated into Education courses on campus as well as in off-campus sites in order to train both faculty and students in the use of Tk20.

---

**Fall Semester, 2009**

**Implementation**  
School of Education utilizing Tk20. Fall Faculty Retreat sharing and discussion of objectives, course embedded assignments, and rubric building. Student supports must be in place through IT to include helpdesk access 7p.m. through midnight.

**Training**  
Selected Core and Academic department faculty prepare outcomes, rubrics, and syllabi for loading into Tk20.

**Expected Outcome**  
At close of fall semester, COR 101,102 and a minimum of two academic departments in the School of Arts and Sciences, will have data ready to load in Tk20.

---

**Interterm, 2010**

**Implementation**  
Tk20 specialists load COR 101, 102 and two academic departments into Tk20.

**Training**  
Tk20 training for faculty who are not teaching Interterm courses. Ongoing training for Education faculty continues simultaneously. Student training sessions offered through Interterm.

**Expected Outcome**  
By beginning of spring semester these courses will be operational through Tk20.

---

**Spring Semester, 2010**

**Implementation**  
COR 101, 102, and two academic departments in Arts and Sciences begin utilizing Tk20.

**Training**  
Four additional departments in Arts and Sciences and two in Professional Studies prepare course syllabi, objectives, and rubrics for Tk20. Trainers help departments in preparing data as well as problem solving with those who have started to utilize Tk20.

**Expected Outcome**  
Trainers focus on problem solving and increasing the ease of use of the TK20 system.
**Summer Term, 2010**

**Implementation**
Tk20 specialists load four Arts and Sciences departments and two professional studies departments into Tk20. Remaining Arts and Science departments and professional studies programs/departments prepare objectives, syllabi, and rubrics for Tk20.

**Training**
Faculty training for Arts and Sciences as well as Professional Studies programs. Additional adjunct faculty training offered at off-campus sites for those serving in GOAL programs.

**Expected Outcome**
Remaining courses ready to load into Tk20. All faculty have received initial training.

**Fall Semester, 2010**

**Implementation**
Tk20 specialists load remaining courses into Tk20.

**Training**
Focus on improving student use of portfolio feature of Tk20. Ongoing training for faculty as well as administrative personnel who serve in student development, registrar’s office, and admissions. Faculty training emphasizes the use of advising options available in Tk20.

**Expected Outcome**
All course data entered and ready to integrate with enrollment, Registrar’s Office, and institutional assessment data.

**Interterm, 2011**

**Implementation**
Systems check for the full integration of entry and usage across Schools and programs. Education able to run preliminary reports. Alumni data entered and integrated across institution.

**Training**
Student and faculty training beyond initial level now available. Faculty and department group emphasis on mapping/sequencing courses within the majors, improving rubrics, and summative analysis of portfolios.

**Expected Outcome**
Expand IT helpdesk services to meet the higher number of students and faculty using the system.
**Spring Semester, 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation</th>
<th>Student Development Center opens featuring comprehensive career planning and networking capability based on Tk20 utilization.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Regular schedule of training programs offered through SDC for both faculty and students. Using Alumni networks for department development purposes and career shadowing/practica for majors is emphasized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Outcome</td>
<td>Tk20 becomes a part of the campus culture. It is no longer “new,” students and faculty understand and accept its function as a learning tool.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Financial Requirements**

The School of Education has earmarked $20,000 of their spring 2009 budget for use in obtaining a server for Tk20 as well as covering the initial costs of training and implementation. An additional $10,000 was donated by the Board Member who responded to Dr. Hall’s paper. The funds currently needed for Blackboard could be transferred toward the implementation of Tk20. Assessment funds could be temporarily diverted for use toward Tk20, although this budget would need to be restored after the initial year in order to resume use of longitudinal measures of student growth. Clearly, other sources of revenue are required to cover the costs of implementation, training, and maintenance of Tk20 between 2009 and 2012. External funding sources must be considered to augment what funds might be reallocated from the current budget.

The development of a new Student Development Center to house and expand the use of Tk20 technology will require outside funding. If a Capitol Campaign is undertaken for Hogue Hall, a portion could be earmarked for such a center.

Personnel dedicated to faculty training, student and faculty support, and institutional tracking of the outcomes available through the new system will be essential to the success of the undertaking. Existing positions could be expanded with provisions for Tk20 oversight if additional (possibly adjunct) faculty were available to cover an additional course or component of a job function that the designated individual’s normal responsibilities. New position titles, and/or the development of one or more new positions may need to be considered in order to provide the needed oversight for implementing Tk20.

Financial provision for expanded IT support for student and faculty use of Tk20 must be available at the onset of implementation. Education students and faculty will be the first to participate in the technology, however, even in the first semester of implementation, Fall 2009, faculty from other departments will need to begin working with the system—modifying syllabi, creating rubrics, and integrating curriculum—in a way that will easily upload into Tk20.
Benefits to Constituents

The potential impact of data generated by Tk20 in student recruitment, retention, Alumni tracking, faculty development, and sharpening the profile of Greenville College on the national scene is immense. If the use of Tk20 makes it possible to advertise our evidence of “transforming lives for character and service,” the results could be a stunning increase in the number of students who desire to come and take part in the culture of personal and spiritual maturation that takes place at Greenville College. Students, faculty, alumni, administrators, and Board members would benefit. Even more profound would be the impact upon our community and world. Through funding sources that would look favorably at Greenville College’s ability to fulfill its mission, new opportunities for international endeavors would become available.

Tk20 meets current needs within the School of Education as well as institutional needs that include program development in the School of Arts and Sciences and the School of Professional Studies. The following items are among the most compelling when considering whether or not a move to Tk20 is expedient and timely for Greenville College:

- Accreditation through ISBE and HLC requires a comprehensive database that provides periodic programmatic summaries to determine whether students are achieving program and institutional objectives. Tk20 provides these summaries for courses, undergraduate programs, schools, graduate programs and the institution as a whole.

- The various software systems used within schools and programs at Greenville College are currently not integrated with the Registrar’s office or the system of institutional goals and objectives used to assess program quality. Tk20 consolidates and replaces these systems (Blackboard, TESTS, Live Text, PACE) with a unified network that tracks growth and progress across the undergraduate, graduate, and alumnus status of constituents.

- The Advising process within General Education, majors, minors, GOAL, MAE, MAT, and UTEP would be improved through the use of a consolidated system like Tk20. Each academic program would benefit from the improved recruitment and retention provided through the use of Tk20 in advising. Students not only are able to “try on” other majors, but four year plans may easily be generated across a variety of major/minor combinations.

Conclusion

While Greenville College will go forward without Tk20, the trajectory of institutional growth will be diminished if this type of 21st century technology is not implemented. Constituents will go elsewhere, to other institutions with more flexible and responsive technology. Board members and key administrators are encouraged to stand behind this effort and find adequate financial resources to complete the task. Providing for this type of tracking technology is more important to the growth and prosperity of Greenville College than replacing Hogue Hall.