

**IT INVESTMENT CAPITAL FUND
PROJECT STATUS REPORT**

To: Information Technology Strategy and Investment Committee
John Vittner, Office of Policy & Management

FROM: Shirley Adams

AGENCY/PROJECT NAME: Board of Regents – CT Education Academy

PROJECT MANAGER: Shirley Adams

REPORTING PERIOD: Project Inception through 06/30/2018

Total Funds Requested: \$ 1,857,615

Bond Commission Approval(s):	Date: Jan. 2014	Amount: \$ 1,595,838
	Date: Feb. 2018	Amount: \$ 261,777

Accumulative Total Capital Fund Expenditures to Date: \$1,434,441.38. (as of 06/30/2018)

Brief Project Description/Summary:

The CT Education Academy is an eLearning and recording keeping ecosystem designed and built for the State of Connecticut workforce; it provides a central online location/platform for employees, and related constituents, to access many State mandated training courses as well as professional development opportunities.

Summary of Progress Achieved to Date:

January-June 2014

During the first six months, the initial set of specifications was drafted for the program and the development of the administrative and learning system platforms, as well as the Department of Administrative Service's *Active Shooter Response* course, had begun.

July-December 2014

During the next six months, the first phase of the CT Education Academy administrative system was finalized to accommodate web-based training. (A summary of functionality is included as Attachment A.) A high-availability designed Blackboard learning system was also fully deployed during this time. Additionally, the *Active Shooter Response* course development was completed.

In November 2014, a group of 30 state employees connected to state training and education efforts were invited to pilot the finalized *Active Shooter Response* course within the CT Education Academy system. The feedback provided by the pilot users was collected and addressed in system and course improvements throughout the month of December in preparation for the next, larger pilot group scheduled for early 2015.

January – June 2015

In February 2015, a second pilot group containing 120+ Department of Administrative Services employees and 80+ Charter Oak State College employees completed the *Active Shooter Response* course within the CT Education Academy platform. The pilot feedback coupled with the course evaluations provided additional information to further enhance the program and was implemented during this time period. A full quality assurance process was completed on the system and course in preparation for a state-wide launch.

Also from February through April, we visited state agencies currently utilizing SABA for online learning to ascertain what system features would be required in the CT Education Academy platform to accommodate current business processes in the SABA system. During the visits, we were able to determine current business practices and processes needing to be addressed as well as current processes in need of improvement and missing functionality in the current system. We gathered this information to develop a Phase 2 road map for the CT Education Academy program. The Phase 2 plan will not only provide similar functionality, but will provide enhanced processes and additional features. We are waiting for confirmation that Phase 2 will be approved and funded.

In March 2015, the Advisory Council had its inaugural meeting. This group was orientated to the CT Education Academy program and asked for feedback on how to best serve the state. The Advisory Council will be asked to help guide the future direction of the program and help determine the state's current training needs.

In May 2015, the initial stage of course development was started on the *Workplace Violence Prevention* course.

In June 2015, the Executive Steering Committee met to discuss a roll-out strategy to the state agencies interested in the *Active Shooter Response* course and the CT Education Academy platform.

July-December 2015

In late July, the Commissioner's office sent a state-wide message about the availability of the *Active Shooter Response* course and the steps for onboarding for the CT Education Academy. From that point, CTDLC coordinated and facilitated over **20 visits** to interested agencies. During the visits, CTDLC performed a readiness assessment with agency representatives to ensure minimum technical requirements were met and performed training for the designated agency administrators within the CT Education Academy platform.

Also, a new release of the CT Education Academy platform was launched in August. This version offered an improved user experience, enhanced reporting, and additional program and onboarding information for interested agencies.

In addition, the *Workplace Violence Prevention* course development neared completion. The course is ready for piloting. Once the pilot feedback has been processed, the final alterations and media elements will be completed.

Lastly, the Executive Steering Committee continued to discuss potential SABA LMS migration to the CT Education Academy platform. After reviewing the Academy product road map and the SABA agencies' function requests, a conversation regarding further needs analysis was had.

January-June 2016

The CT Education Academy continues to expand the number of agencies accessing the system, the number of courses being offered, and the functionality of the core platform. CTDLC has coordinated

and facilitated **33 visits** to interested agencies to date, assessing technical readiness while performing training for the designated agency administrators within the CT Education Academy platform.

Many of the agencies have joined the Academy to access the *Active Shooter Response* course, now totaling over **3,000 enrollments** since its launch in August 2015.

A select number of state employees were invited to pilot the *Workplace Violence Prevention* course this past February. Based on the feedback of those users, improvements were made and the final version of *Workplace Violence Prevention* was launched state-wide in June.

Also launched in June, the **Office of State Ethics** released their *Ethics 101* course to the CT Education Academy audience. The course was modified to include a comprehension-based final, a standard established at the start of the CT Education Academy program. As a result, only a passing grade will grant a learner a certificate of completion, as it demonstrates a basic understanding of the curriculum has been met.

During the February to June timeframe, **Criminal Justice Information System** piloted the CT Education Academy platform to support their state-wide law enforcement training curriculum which serves state, municipal and private law enforcement agencies. Feedback gathered from this pilot group is being addressed in the next two releases on the platform.

The platform was upgraded to version 1.1 in February. This release focused on improvements in reporting, organization management, course management, and overall platform security.

Lastly, the team has been assessing and revising the *Sexual Harassment Prevention* curriculum obtained through the State of Washington to suit the needs of the State of Connecticut.

July-December 2016

The CT Education Academy continues to grow in usage and interest. Since August 2015, the Academy has had over **6,800 enrollments** (more than double since the last report) across more than **40 State agencies** and 6 towns.

While additional agencies continue to express interest in the Academy for state trainings, an even greater number of agencies are exploring the Academy as a vehicle for their own training delivery. Currently, the **Department of Administrative Services, Office of State Ethics, and Criminal Justice Information System** are utilizing the Academy platform to manage their online training offerings while the **Department of Motor Vehicles, Office of Education and Data Management, and Department of Rehabilitation Services** have been piloting the system for select courses.

In 2017, the following agencies will be utilizing the CT Education Academy to manage their online and/or in-person training offerings: the **Office of Education and Data Management** and **Department of Rehabilitation Services** will transition from pilot programs to full production while the **Department of Banking** and **Department of Energy & Environmental Protection** will begin new programs.

During the July to December timeframe, version 1.2 of the Academy platform was launched (August 2016), which contained new reporting functions as well as improvements to the course creation and permission granting processes. During this timeframe, version 1.3 was also developed, which is scheduled to launch on February 1, 2017. The version 1.3 release will focus on the management of in-person trainings and offer additional system roles, roster management tools, and reporting options.

In September 2016, the DAS project liaison left State service, which impacted the course development schedule. The *Sexual Harassment Prevention* training, which was nearly complete, needed final approval of course content. With his departure, and no one to facilitate this final course review step, the progression of the Sexual Harassment Prevention training course stalled. Additionally, we had begun several planning sessions and course content review for a new *LEAN 101* course, which also went dormant since his departure. In December, however, DAS did assign a new content expert to the Sexual Harassment Prevention course to facilitate the final content review in preparation for the course to pilot. Based on this development, we hope to launch this course in early 2017.

Lastly, in December, the **Board of Regents of Higher Education** agreed to list the *State In-Service Training Catalog* within the CT Education Academy platform. All **130 courses** are currently listed and available for registration. This achievement will save agencies countless hours of manual entry of the catalog into their individual training systems as well as the transcription of the completed courses.

January-June 2017

Continuing its steady growth, the CT Education Academy has supported over **6,000 unique users** from **89 different agencies/organizations**, accessing **67 different courses** with over **9,000 enrollments** since the program's inception.

Some growth can be contributed to the inclusion of the *State's In-Service Catalog* within the platform. All 130 course/sections offered by the CT Community Colleges were available for registration within the Academy for the spring 2017 semester. This listing was implemented in order to save agencies countless hours of manual entry of the catalog into their individual training systems as well as the transcription of the completed courses.

Other usage growth can be attributed to an increase in the number of agencies hosting their own training courses on the CT Education Academy. In addition to the **Office of Education and Data Management**, the **Department of Banking** and the **Department of Consumer Protection** have signed on to utilize the Academy platform for their training management. Both the **Department of Motor Vehicles** and **Department of Rehabilitation Services** ran successful pilots on the platform. The **Department of Energy and Environmental Protection** is making final preparations to deliver their first of three training on the Academy platform this fall. The **Connecticut State College & University** system is currently evaluating the Academy platform to assume all of its employee training needs for the upcoming year.

During the January to June timeframe, *version 1.3* of the Academy platform was launched (February 2017), which offered new capacity for agencies to manage their in-person (face-to-face) training needs. The platform now enables the scheduling, enrollment, and roster management of in-person trainings, including dynamic sign-in sheets, roster communication, and reconciliation. Additionally, new reports were designed for agencies delivering training on the Academy platform.

Lastly, after a long hiatus, some additional work was performed on the *Sexual Harassment Prevention* course only to stall again just short of completion and launch. Unfortunately, final approval has not been granted for this course's release to the state workforce. At this time, it unclear if DAS will move forward to finalize and release the *Sexual Harassment Prevention* course as a state workforce offering. Additionally, all discussions about the development of a *LEAN 101* course and *New Manager's Orientation* course have ceased at the request of the DAS' subject matter experts.

To better serve the CT Education Academy agency administrator users, the development of a training course focused on CT Education Academy features, tools, and best practices has begun.

July-December 2017

The CT Education Academy usage continues to grow. It now supports **more than 7,000 unique users** from **more than 120 different agencies/organization units** with **more than 11,000 enrollments** since inception.

Some growth can be attributed to expanded usage at agencies like the **Department of Motor Vehicles** and the **Department of Energy and Environmental Protection** for their own training programs. The **Office of Early Childhood** in conjunction with **Eastern Connecticut State University** also launched a pilot course during this period which represents the first course in a series of 9 courses scheduled to launch during 2018.

Agencies such as the **Connecticut State College & University (CSCU)** system and **Connecticut Health & Education Facilities Authority** continue to evaluate and/or pilot the CT Education Academy for broader usage. CSCU is looking to transition all training to the Academy within the next fiscal year.

Also, during this period, **DAS** and the **Connecticut Training & Development Network (CTDN)** hosted a gathering of state-wide training professionals to discuss state-wide training needs. The CT Education Academy was mentioned as a possible solution for a centralized, collaborative training hub. The CTDN leadership will be focusing a future half day workshop on the CT Education Academy program.

In addition to the DAS/CTDN event, CTDLC staff have been invited to partner with DAS HR to evaluate the feasibility of deploying commercial courseware within the Academy platform in order to address mandatory training requirements such as **Sexual Harassment Prevention**.

Lastly, the planning of **version 1.4** of the Academy platform began during this period. This new release, which launched in March 2018, will provide agencies with the ability to extend enrollment invitations to constituents that reside outside the state workforce and the ability to manage policy compliance/attestations.

January – June 2018

The CT Education Academy usage continues to grow. It now supports more than 266 different agencies/organization units of which 242 are active with more than 14,500 enrollments and 16,000 users since inception.

Agencies like the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and the Office of Early Childhood in conjunction with Eastern Connecticut State University continue to grow their usage of the Academy in support of their own training programs.

Also, during this period, the Connecticut Training & Development Network (CTDN) hosted a workshop that focused on the CT Education Academy program and how it may be used as a centralized learning center for state agencies.

In addition to the CTDN event, Charter Oak State College leadership have been asked to address the mandatory training requirement of Sexual Harassment Prevention and revisit the courseware provided by the State of Washington.

Lastly, the development of version 1.4 of the Academy platform began during this period. This new release will provide agencies with the ability to extend enrollment invitations to constituents that reside outside the state workforce and the ability to manage policy compliance/attestations.

Issues and Risks:

There is still the risk regarding the sustainability of the CT Education Academy platform. However, based on conversations with Commissioner Curry and staff, the CEA will leverage remaining funding dollars to migrate the BlackBoard application and license to a cloud based model. This transition will address the license, warranty, and server support issues and position the CEA for future growth.

There is still an issue that the fees collected for service are not enough to sustain the operational costs for the system. This topic is scheduled to be discussed in early January. If appropriate, the goal will be to establish a proposed “chargeback” model to state agencies which allows the CEA to be self-sustaining. The current model of centralized support is still viable. Both options will be presented in January to the Commissioner.

In Spring 2018, Charter Oak State College made the decision to close CTDLC and to transfer some of the projects over to the College. In June 2018, Charter Oak appointed Dr. Shirley Adams, who is the Provost for the College, to oversee the CEA project as the CTDLC was dissolved. Dr. Adams bring 40 years of experience in adult learning in both face-to-face and distance learning environments. She oversees the largest instructional design department within public higher education in CT and this group has successfully designed, built, and maintained over 300 adult-centric distance learning courses.

Since the project requires us to use the State of CT SDM process, it requires a project manager, business analysts, development environment, test environment, production environment, Quality assurance, security review, etc. Therefore Dr. Adams has gathered a team of instructional designers, developers, IT staff, and business office staff to determine next steps with the project since there has been a reduction in staff with the closure of CTDLC.

Next Steps & Project Milestones:

See the first paragraph above in Issues and Risks. If the CEA can leverage the remaining funding for the Blackboard conversion, this will be an important milestone to prepare CEA for future growth.

In January, hopefully a decision will be made regarding making the CEA self-sustaining. (See second paragraph in Issues and Risks)

Following the version 1.4 platform release in March 2018 we have continued to collect enhancement requests, however, no further development is planned until the self-sustaining funding model is in place. Fall 2018 we will be focused on redeploying current functionality to work with the Blackboard cloud based LMS.

The College is working on the DAS Sexual Harassment course and should have it developed within a couple of months. Completing the contract with Eastern Connecticut State University—scheduled for the end of the year, with the Spanish versions to be completed in the spring. Access to the Shooter course was given to the CSCU system. The instructional designers are working on the Inland Wetland course for the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. It may not be finished

by the end of December when the current instructional designers depart. The delay has been due to DEEP not keeping on schedule. We will ensure that this course gets completed.