2024 Technology Fee Full Proposal

Title: Strengthening University of Florida Student Community with AI-powered Discussion

Proposer:
Heather Young, Instructional Assistant Professor, UF College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, Department of Agricultural Education and Communication, heather.young@ufl.edu, 352-273-0749, 113A Bryant Space Science Center, 1772 Stadium Road, Building 38, Gainesville, FL 32611

Kathryn Rush, Instructional Designer III, UF College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, Center for Online Learning and Technology (COLT), krush@ufl.edu, 352-273-3565, 1740 McCarty Dr., Building 162 Gainesville, FL 32611

Sponsoring Organization: College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, Center for Online Learning & Technology (COLT)

Purpose and Specific Objectives:

The purpose of this project is to support the core UF values of **community** and **freedom & civility** by enhancing discussions in Canvas courses using an innovative technology tool called **Packback**. Packback is an online platform that allows students to post and respond to open-ended questions, fostering critical thinking and curiosity. Packback helps connect students with their classmates (community) while also allowing them to express their authentic selves (freedom & civility) in these discussions. This tool creates conditions where inquiry can flourish, and students can practice an open-minded culture rooted in a mutual respect for others. Moreover, students can benefit from the preliminary feedback they receive from Packback's AI coach, which helps them improve their writing and reasoning skills. This immediate feedback can improve student scores.

The specific objectives of this project are to:

1. Promote the use of Packback strategically in high enrollment, online courses that use a discussion model for learner-learner interaction.
2. Monitor adoption and impact on student learning objectives.

Packback cultivates an exceptional academic environment through the innovative use of technology that solves a real-world challenge. It is difficult for students to feel connected with their classmates and faculty, especially in large classes, and it is challenging for faculty to build a community of learners in online courses. This educational tool reduces the feeling of an impersonal classroom and allows for deeper engagement. Packback offers an improved way for students to interact around the course topics in which they are most interested. Furthermore, faculty can offer students feedback more quickly. Ultimately, Packback will make discussions more enjoyable!

Impact/Benefit:

Benefits to students:

What if course discussion board posts could be more meaningful and focus on what you as a student want to discuss? What if you could know your grade on a discussion post immediately and work to improve your score even before submitting?

With Packback, students drive the discussion by posing open-ended questions! Even better, AI scoring predicts how well you're matching the instructor's criteria while you write. This gives you time to adjust your post and achieve a higher score.

Watch this short video about Packback to see how this tool goes beyond the capabilities of Discussion boards in Canvas: How to Write Amazing Posts on Packback, and Why You Should! (3:44)

Benefits Packback would provide UF students include:

- **Deep engagement** with topics and fellow students **even in large enrollment courses**
- **Authentic discussions** where students share their perspectives and focus on topics they find meaningful
- Friendly modern interface with **more features** compared to Canvas Discussions, including a leaderboard and multiple ways to show agreement or praise.
- AI student-coaching to build critical thinking and writing skills **useful in life and future careers**
- **Cost savings** for students already using tool. Currently around 3800 students at UF are paying $39 per semester to use this tool.

Benefits to instructors:

Packback offers benefits to instructors as well as to students. This tool promotes the use of higher-level skills on Bloom's Taxonomy (evaluate, apply) in discussions, and uses self-determination theory to inspire students' *intrinsic motivation*, helping them to become more self-directed learners. (Learn more: What is Packback? (2:05))

The incorporation of AI feedback and scoring provides substantial time savings which allows instructors to engage meaningfully with their students, even in larger enrollment courses. This helps instructors meet a variety of UF Quality Standards (UF+QM) for online courses, which will be required for all online courses beginning in 2025, so adopting this technology would be a proactive step!

- QM 6.2 Course tools promote learner engagement and active learning.
- UF 10.2 Instructor creates an inclusive, supportive, and engaging climate through a variety of methods.
- UF 10.1 Instructor provides space and encouragement for students to develop an online learning community.
- UF 10.5 Students are given the opportunity to relate personal experiences and apply their background knowledge/skills to the coursework.

Faculty at UF are already finding the tool valuable and effective, and believe it is having a positive effect on student outcomes:

> The course I implemented Packback Questions and Deep Dives into is a large enrollment (249 students), entirely online, asynchronous course focused on research and business writing within the context of agriculture and natural resources. Going into this semester, I was nervous about how students would respond to this new tool. We all know it could be the greatest tool, but if students don't buy into it, it will never be used to its fullest potential. I assumed the program would help create more authentic conversations, but I didn't realize how much the discussion post quality would improve.
>
> Students are learning to write better quality, higher-order thinking questions, naturally creating more in-depth and genuine conversations. Learning how to ask better questions and provide well-thought-out responses, deeper than the surface-level response, will help students beyond this course, beyond their college careers, and well into their professional lives as lifelong learners. The Deep Dives have resulted in students submitting better-quality writing assignments right from their first submission by utilizing real-time AI-generated feedback. As an unexpected but welcomed bonus, the rubric design and grading layout have saved my TAs and me time by streamlining the grading process. The customized guiding questions are great for us as they highlight where the student has addressed the questions specifically and a plus for students to make sure they identified the main points of the assignment.
>
> *Heather Young, Agricultural Education & Communication*

Over the last year, students and instructors have launched Packback through Canvas in 73 courses, and we think Packback could be a benefit to many more instructors and students.

Sustainability:

If funded, Packback could be enabled globally in Canvas as soon as a contract is in place because this LTI has already been reviewed and approved for use. An accessibility review has already been completed, and Packback complies with UF's accessibility policy (see attached Tier 2 review and VPAT).

We estimate that it will take approximately one year to design and implement a communications campaign to roll out the tool to UF campus and prepare training materials. It would take an additional semester to review and report on adoption of the tool.

In terms of one-on-one support, Packback support is available to be contacted directly for both faculty and students. Faculty are paired with a specific Packback representative who reaches out before each semester to assist faculty with setup and answer questions. Students also have access to a support button for live support during use of the tool.

In terms of cost sustainability, we are requesting funds for **2 years** to evaluate if the benefits of the tool are worth funding further. If the University of Florida is satisfied with adoption of the tool after 2 years, we would request that UFIT consider funding the tool going forward.

Timeline:

We propose free access for all students during Fall 2024-Summer 2026. During the summer of 2024 UFIT eLearning will collaborate with the vendor to install the Packback LTI to make it available for UF students. Instructors will learn of this new institutionally funded tool through UF Canvas announcements, listserv emails, and via their instructional design units. Data will be gathered annually from both students and faculty to determine how the tool improves learning outcomes and student satisfaction. At the end of the grant period, this data will be analyzed to determine if the pilot was successful, and whether a proposal for expanded central funding is appropriate.

Budget:

During Spring 2024 alone 3,800 UF students have paid $39 each to use Packback which totals $148,200.

With this funding request we are proposing a 2-year pilot program beginning in Fall 2024. In year 1 with the 40% rollout discount, the license agreement reduces the per-student cost from $39.00 to $2.00. By year two, the rollout discount settles at 30%, and per-student cost settles at $2.40, an overall 94% discount for students.

Funding this tech fee grant would provide Packback access to the **entire student body** for the same cost that 3,800 students are currently paying just for their own access.

	Year 1	Year 2
Base Cost (50,000+ students)	$200,000	$200,000
Base $/student	$4	$4
Rollout Discount	50%	40%
Cost Savings	$100,000	$80,000
Effective $/student	$2.00	$2.40
Total Per Year Investment	$100,000	$120,000
TOTAL REQUESTED AMOUNT: $220,000		

Technology Fee Full Proposal Template Sponsor Signature Form

Title: Strengthening University of Florida Student Community with AI-powered Discussion
Proposer's Name: **Heather Young, Kathryn Rush, Allyson Haskell, Margeaux Johnson**

Note: By signing this form, the sponsor is making a commitment to support the project. This may include providing startup, recurring or equipment replacement resources as presented in the attached budget.   **Signature of sponsor: College Dean, or Unit Director, or VP for Student Affairs.**   *Allen Wysocki* _____   3/15/2024 | 12:42 PM EDT _____   **Associate Dean Allen Wysocki, UF IFAS CALS**   **Date**

Note: By signing this form, the UF IT unit is making a commitment to manage the project if selected for submission of a full proposal. This may include providing startup, recurring or equipment replacement resources as presented in the attached budget.   **Signature of unit UFIT Director of a core unit:**   *Mark McCallister* _____   3/18/2024 | 9:21 AM EDT _____   **Mark McCallister, Director, Academic Technology, UFIT**   **Date**

DocuSign

Certificate Of Completion

Envelope Id: E48981EEAEC84E548C284AA810E6A5A5
Subject: Complete with DocuSign: Packback Proposal - Enterprise Level Request.docx
Process:
Source Envelope:
Document Pages: 5
Certificate Pages: 5
AutoNav: Enabled
EnvelopeId Stamping: Enabled
Time Zone: (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)

Signatures: 2
Initials: 0

Status: Completed

Envelope Originator:
Allyson Haskell
971 Elmore Drive, Rm 102
PO Box 115250
Gainesville, FL 32611
ahaskell@ufl.edu
IP Address: 132.170.253.214

Record Tracking

Status: Original
    3/15/2024 11:23:37 AM

Holder: Allyson Haskell
    ahaskell@ufl.edu

Location: DocuSign

Signer Events	Signature	Timestamp
Allen Wysocki wysocki@ufl.edu Associate Dean University of Florida - College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Security Level: Email, Account Authentication (None)	*Allen Wysocki* Signature Adoption: Pre-selected Style Using IP Address: 128.227.126.57	Sent: 3/15/2024 11:27:34 AM Viewed: 3/15/2024 12:39:53 PM Signed: 3/15/2024 12:42:23 PM
Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure: Not Offered via DocuSign		
Mark McCallister markm@ufl.edu Director, Academic Technology University of Florida Information Technology Security Level: Email, Account Authentication (None)	*Mark McCallister* Signature Adoption: Pre-selected Style Using IP Address: 128.227.239.216	Sent: 3/15/2024 12:42:24 PM Viewed: 3/18/2024 9:20:21 AM Signed: 3/18/2024 9:21:12 AM
Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure: Not Offered via DocuSign		

In Person Signer Events	Signature	Timestamp

Editor Delivery Events	Status	Timestamp

Agent Delivery Events	Status	Timestamp

Intermediary Delivery Events	Status	Timestamp

Certified Delivery Events	Status	Timestamp

Carbon Copy Events	Status	Timestamp
Margeaux Johnson margeaux@ufl.edu UF - CFR 21 Part 11 Account Security Level: Email, Account Authentication (None)	COPIED	Sent: 3/18/2024 9:21:14 AM

Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure:
  Accepted: 4/3/2023 4:27:16 PM
  ID: ccf8a776-426b-4de5-a0cf-052c1e971120		

Carbon Copy Events	Status	Timestamp
Heather Young heather.young@ufl.edu University of Florida Security Level: Email, Account Authentication (None) **Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure:** Not Offered via DocuSign	**COPIED**	Sent: 3/18/2024 9:21:14 AM
Kathryn Rush krush@ufl.edu Security Level: Email, Account Authentication (None) **Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure:** Not Offered via DocuSign	**COPIED**	Sent: 3/18/2024 9:21:15 AM Viewed: 3/18/2024 9:49:32 AM

Witness Events	Signature	Timestamp

Notary Events	Signature	Timestamp

Envelope Summary Events	Status	Timestamps
Envelope Sent	Hashed/Encrypted	3/15/2024 11:27:34 AM
Certified Delivered	Security Checked	3/18/2024 9:20:21 AM
Signing Complete	Security Checked	3/18/2024 9:21:12 AM
Completed	Security Checked	3/18/2024 9:21:15 AM

Payment Events	Status	Timestamps

Electronic Record and Signature Disclosure

DISCLOSURE AND CONSENT TO USE ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS AND SIGNATURES

From time to time, the University of Florida (we, us, our, or UF) may be required by law to provide you certain written notices or disclosures and may also choose to provide you with agreements, statements, authorizations, acknowledgments and other documents (collectively, "Documents"). Described below are the terms and conditions for providing such Documents electronically through the UFDocuSign electronic signing system. This supplements all other agreements you have with UF; however, in the case of any inconsistency, the terms herein shall control as applied to your consent to receive and sign Documents electronically through UFDocuSign. Please read the information below carefully and thoroughly, and if you can access this information electronically to your satisfaction and agree to these terms and conditions, please confirm your agreement by clicking the 'I agree' button at the bottom of this document. If you are agreeing on behalf of a business entity, you also agree that you have the requisite authority to consent to this Disclosure and Consent to Use Electronic Records and Signatures on behalf of the entity.

All Documents may be sent to you electronically

Unless you tell us otherwise, in accordance with the procedures described herein, we may, in our sole discretion, provide electronically to you through the UFDocuSign system all Documents that are required to be provided or made available to you during the course of our relationship. We may always, in our sole discretion, provide you with any Documents in paper form, even if you have chosen to receive it electronically.

Getting paper copies

At any time, you may request a paper copy of any Document provided or made available electronically by us. You will have the ability to download and print documents we send to you through the UFDocuSign system during and immediately after the signing session. To request delivery from us of paper copies of the Document(s) previously provided electronically, you must send an e-mail reply to the sender of the electronic Document(s) and state your e-mail address, full name, US Postal address, and telephone number.

Withdrawing your consent

If you decide to receive Documents from us electronically, you may at any time change your mind and tell us that thereafter you want to receive Documents only in paper format. To indicate to us that you are changing your mind, you must withdraw your consent using the UFDocuSign 'Withdraw Consent' form on the signing page of an UFDocuSign envelope. This will indicate to us that you have withdrawn your consent to receive required notices and disclosures electronically. You will no longer be able to use the UFDocuSign system to receive Documents electronically from us or to electronically sign Documents from us.

If you withdraw your consent, it will become effective only after a reasonable period of time has passed to allow us to process such request. If you elect to receive Documents only in paper format, your withdrawal of consent will have no legal effect on the validity or enforceability of any Documents provided to you in electronic form or electronically signed by you through UFDocuSign prior to the effective date of your withdrawal. Withdrawing your consent means you will be sent and sign Documents in paper form going forward.

To inform us that you no longer want to receive future Documents in electronic form you may:

  i. decline to sign a document from within your UFDocuSign session, and on the subsequent page, select the check-box indicating you wish to withdraw your consent; or

  ii. send us an e-mail to UF-DocuSign@ufl.edu and in the body of such request state your

e-mail, full name, US Postal Address, and telephone number. We do not need any other information from you to withdraw consent.

How to contact UF

You may contact us to let us know of changes to your electronic contact information, to request paper copies of certain information from us, and to withdraw your prior consent to receive Documents electronically as follows:

- To contact us by email send messages to: UF-DocuSign@ufl.edu
- To contact us by paper mail, please send correspondence to:

  University of Florida Information Technology
  Attn: UFDocuSign Service
  P.O. Box 113359
  Gainesville, FL 32611-3359

To advise UF of your new e-mail address

You agree to promptly update us regarding any change in your email address so that we may send Documents to you electronically, as needed. To let us know of a change in your e-mail address, you must send an email message to us at UF-DocuSign@ufl.edu and in the body of such request state: your previous e-mail address, your new e-mail address. You also agree to promptly update us regarding any change to your other contact information in the same manner described above.

In addition, you must notify UF to arrange for your new email address to be reflected in your UFDocuSign account by following the process for changing e-mail in the UFDocuSign system.

Recommended hardware and software

Operating Systems:	Most recent final release versions: Windows® and Mac OS®	.
Browsers:	Final release versions of Internet Explorer® 6.0 or above (Windows only); Mozilla Firefox 2.0 or above (Windows and Mac); Safari™ 3.0 or above (Mac only)	
PDF Reader:	Acrobat® or similar software may be required to view and print PDF files	
Screen Resolution:	800 x 600 minimum	
Enabled Security Settings:	Allow per session cookies	

These minimum requirements are subject to change. If these requirements change, you will be asked to re-accept the disclosure. Pre-release (e.g. beta) versions of operating systems and browsers are not supported.

Acknowledging your access and consent to receive Documents electronically

To confirm to us that you can access this information electronically, which will be similar to other electronic Documents that we will provide to you, please verify that you were able to read this DISCLOSURE AND CONSENT TO USE ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS AND SIGNATURES and that you also were able to print on paper or electronically save this page for your future reference and access or that you were able to e-mail this DISCLOSURE AND CONSENT TO USE ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS AND SIGNATURES to an address where you will be able to print on paper or save it for your future reference and access.

Further, if you consent to receiving notices and disclosures exclusively in electronic format on the terms and conditions described above, please let us know by clicking the 'I agree' button below.

By checking the 'I agree' box, I confirm that:

- I can access and read this DISCLOSURE AND CONSENT TO USE ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS AND SIGNATURES document; and
- I can print on paper the DISCLOSURE AND CONSENT TO USE ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS AND SIGNATURES document or save or send it to a place where I can print it, for future reference and access; and
- I agree to the terms and conditions in this DISCLOSURE AND CONSENT TO USE ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS AND SIGNATURES document; and
- Until or unless I notify UF as described above, I consent to receive exclusively through electronic means all Documents during the course of my relationship with UF under the terms and conditions set forth in this DISCLOSURE AND CONSENT TO USE ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS AND SIGNATURES.