

**University of Massachusetts Amherst**

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**From the Selected Works of Marilyn S. Billings**

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# Seeking Alternatives to High-cost Textbooks: A Case Study of the UMass Amherst Open Education Initiative

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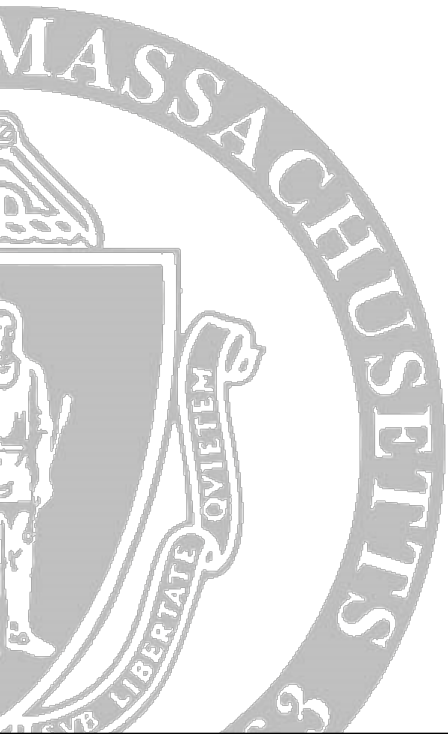
# Seeking Alternatives to High-cost Textbooks:

## A Case Study of the UMass Amherst Open Education Initiative

SPARC Webinar  
March 13, 2014

*Marilyn Billings*

Scholarly Communication Librarian  
University Libraries

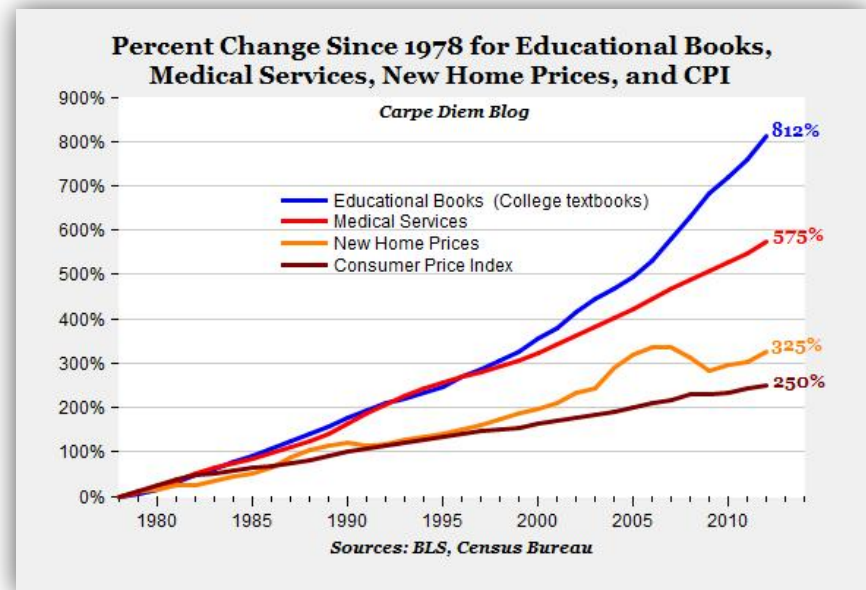
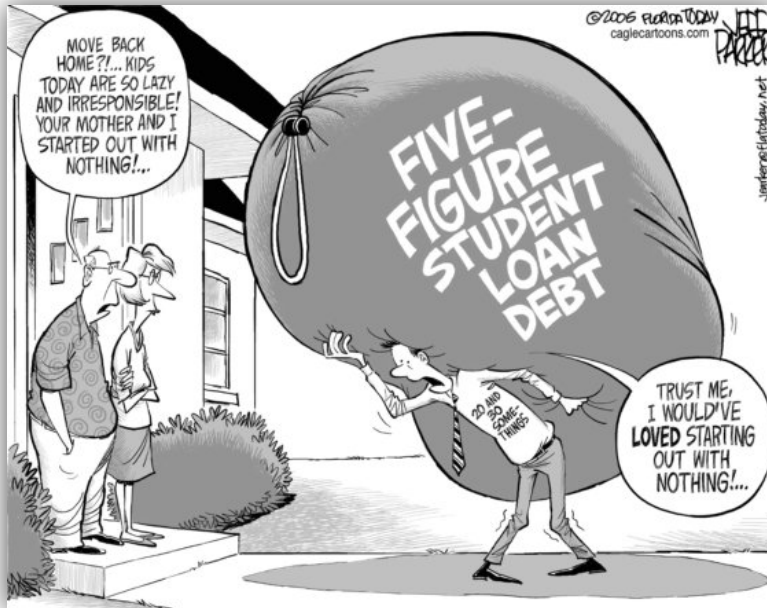


## Outline

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- National and UMass context
  - Genesis of Open Education Initiative
  - Implementation of OEI
  - Preliminary assessment
  - Next steps
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# Textbook Trends



The high cost of commercial print textbooks is a major concern for parents, students, and even the federal government.

## UMass Amherst Profile

- Public Land-grant, Research Intensive University
- Over 28,000 students, 1200 faculty
- 108 bachelor's, 76 masters, 50 doctorates



# The UMass Amherst Open Education Initiative: Part I

**February 2011:**

SPARC initiates topic with call about e-text project at Temple, Flat-world Knowledge model

**March 2011:**

Director of UMass Libraries and Provost establish a fund of \$10,000 for open education initiative grants

**March 2011:**

The University Libraries Open Educational Resources LibGuide is created

<http://guides.library.umass.edu/oer>

**March 2011:**

Workshops held for librarians and partners to learn about OERs

**April 2011:**

Round one of the Open Education Initiative begins.

**April 2011:**

Workshops, consultation sessions held for faculty.

## OEI Workshops / Consultations

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- Two one-hour workshops reviewing available Open Educational Resources and library licensed resources: 1) library, partners; 2) faculty
- Individual consulting sessions for faculty with Scholarly Communication and subject liaison librarians, IT staff and others as needed
- Topics covered: OER availability, copyright and licensing issues, Creative Commons licenses, accessibility concerns, creating a sustainable curriculum with OERs, managing resources in the LMS, assistance with creation of new content

# Faculty OEI Support

Peer-Review by IT  
Minor academic  
program faculty

Consultation with  
partners prior to  
award

## Faculty Award Letter

Hi John Q. Professor,

Congratulations! I am very pleased to let you know that you have been selected as one of the winners of an OEI grant for your proposal NANO-SCI 999RL, NCR 999RL. Your official congratulations letter from the Provost and Director of [Libraries with more details](#) will be coming through the mail in a couple of weeks.

If you'd like to get started with your course preparation during intersession, I encourage you to be in touch with your librarian liaisons, Naka Ishii or Maxine Schmidt, Mei Shih in the Center for Teaching and Faculty Development, Matt Sheridan in the Scholarly Communication Office, or one of the rest of the team copied on this email.

Thank you for your interest in this new initiative,

Marilyn

Center for

**TEACHING & FACULTY DEVELOPMENT**

**oit**

Office of Information Technologies

UMass Amherst **Libraries**



**Liaison Assignment**



Open Educational Resources Tags: websiteLast Updated: Oct 27, 2013 | URL: <http://guides.library.umass.edu/oer> | [Print Guide](#) | [RSS Updates](#) | [SHARE](#) [f](#) [t](#) [e](#) ...[Home](#)[For Educators](#)[For Learners](#)[Advocacy](#)[Open Education Initiative](#)[Library Liaisons](#)[Home](#)[Comments\(0\)](#)[Print Page](#)

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## Additional Resources

## Types of OERs

- Learning objects, units, textbooks, scholarly articles  
IRRODL.org
- Multimedia objects (Flash etc.)  
MERLOT
- Courses, programs full curriculum  
CONNECT@HS
- Tools, FOSS  
eduforge

Athabasca University | Canada's Open University  
Open Educational Resources from  
Open Access Week - AthabascaU on  
Vimeo.

[Comments \(0\)](#)

## Useful Links

- [Scholarly Communication LibGuides](#)

[Comments \(0\)](#)

## Open Culture

## Quick Guide

## Open Educational Resources



## What are Open Educational Resources (OER)?

Open Educational Resources are educational materials and resources offered freely and openly for anyone to use and under some licenses to re-mix, improve and redistribute.

Open Educational Resources include:

- Learning content: full courses, course material, content modules, learning objects, collections, and journals.
- Tools: software to support the creation, delivery, use and improvement of open learning content including searching and organization of content, content and learning management systems, content development tools, and online learning communities.
- Implementation resources: Intellectual property licenses to promote open publishing of materials, design-principles, and localization of content.

## Additional Resources



Nicole Allen: Make Textbooks Affordable from SPARC on Vimeo.

[Comments \(0\)](#)

## OER Information

[7 Things You Should Know About Open Educational Resources](#)

[How Open Textbooks are the Path to Textbook Affordability](#)

[Models of Open Educational Resources](#)

[Comments \(0\)](#)

## Faculty Proposal Development

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- Basic course information
- List current textbook(s) and cost, plus number of students
- Narrative (500 words)
- ID alternative sources - workshop, liaisons
- Evaluation of course – outcomes, value of alternative resources, sustainability
- Anticipated start date
- Participation in follow-up assessment

## OEI Summary 2011-13, Rounds 1-3

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- Over 30 faculty participants, 44 courses
  - Humanities
  - Social Sciences
  - Sciences
  - Professional Schools
- \$46,000 invested, over \$700,000 student savings for more than 5000 students
- Demonstrated results!
- We want more!!

## Why the Academic Library?

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- Form a nexus of communication
  - Create strategic partnerships
    - Academic Computing, Center for Teaching and Faculty Development, Center for Educational Software Development, University Press and more
  - Promote Open Access initiatives
  - Curate digital materials
  - Provide expertise on metadata, author rights, fair use rights, copyright
  - Provide expertise on content, accessibility
  - Provide education and workshops
-

## Faculty Survey Results

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On a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being the highest

- My teaching needs were met by the Open Educational Resources implemented in the course. (4.27)
  - Student performance improved compared to past semesters when a traditional textbook was used. (4.36)
  - Student engagement increased compared to past semesters when a traditional textbook was used. (4.09)
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## Faculty Comments

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- “The students are much more satisfied with the new materials; they are more engaged and more prepared than I have ever seen them.”
  - “Grades have improved drastically since using [Open Educational Resources] in my course...the support from the Libraries was outstanding.”
  - “My students are reading more, they are much more organized, and they are happy that they no longer need to spend so much money on materials.”
  - “I was highly satisfied with the resources provided by the Libraries, as are my students.
  - “I received excellent technical support from the Libraries.”
  - “I believe in the importance of attainable resources...I didn’t have to spend money on expensive textbooks or deal with the stress of finding materials online to ship to my dorm after classes started.”
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## Benefits

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- Convenience
- Enhanced functionality, reuse, mixing
  - Full searching
  - Multimedia
  - Linking of references
- Environmental sustainability
- Timeliness
- Pedagogical Implications
  - Increased control of course content
  - Opportunity to rethink/redesign course
  - More engaging for students
  - Potentially more collaborative

## Barriers

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- Time consuming to find high quality OER
- Time consuming to create OER
- May lack prepared tests/quizzes that commercial textbooks offer
- Student preference for reading offline
- Longevity of file formats
- Lack of knowledge by faculty
  - Resources
  - Licenses, copyright
  - Support



## Best Practices

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- Library leadership
  - Partnerships
  - Peer review mechanism
  - Assessment tools
  - Marketing and Advocacy
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## Next steps

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- Sustainable staffing
- Copyediting, proofing expertise
- Assessment
- Advocacy, Marketing, publicity
- University-wide involvement
  - Registrar, Institutional Research

## Questions/Discussion

Contact Information

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