University of Massachusetts Amherst

From the SelectedWorks of Marilyn S. Billings

February 11, 2014

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

Jay Schafer, University of Massachusetts - Amherst
Marilyn S Billings, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/marilyn_billings/57/
Seeking Alternatives to High-cost Textbooks: A Case Study of the UMass Amherst Open Education Initiative

AMICAL Webinar
February 11, 2014

Jay Schafer
Director of Libraries

Marilyn Billings
Scholarly Communication Librarian
Abstract

- The high cost and lack of availability of commercial print textbooks is a major concern for both students and their parents.

- To address these concerns, the Provost’s Office and the University Libraries of the University of Massachusetts Amherst launched the Open Education Initiative in the Spring of 2011, having saved over $750,000 to date.

- This model has an implementation strategy that is easy for others to adopt.
National Political Climate

- Increased attention to cost of higher education
- Increased attention to student debt (student loans)
- Increased attention to cost of textbooks
Campus Political Climate – FY 2010/2011

- Decreased state funding of campus
- Increased tuition/fees for students
Why the Academic Library?

- Form a nexus of communication
- Create strategic partnerships
- 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
Support from the Provost

- Demonstrate efforts to contain the costs of higher education
- Involve faculty in the conversation
- Gain support from the student community
Scholarly Communications System: New Thinking

From Lee Van Orsdel’s “Basics” ACRL ScholarlyComunication 101
The UMass Amherst Open Education Initiative: Part 1

**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.
Workshops and Consultations

- 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
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.
Faculty Proposal Development

- 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
# The Open Education Initiative: Round One

**April 2011:** OEI grant review team established Faculty, librarians, and professional staff.

**May 2011:** Deadline for OEI grants. Review team awards 11 grants to 8 faculty members.

**July 2011:** Money allocated to faculty through the Libraries’ business office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Member</th>
<th>Course Offered</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Savings for Each Student</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maria Botelho</td>
<td>Education 615</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leda Cooks</td>
<td>Comm. 620 &amp; 694</td>
<td>12 &amp; 8</td>
<td>$150 &amp; 175</td>
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<td>Carlos Gradil</td>
<td>Animal Sciences 421</td>
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<td>$80</td>
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<td>Sanjiv Gupta</td>
<td>Sociology 212</td>
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<td>Miliann Kang</td>
<td>Women’s Studies 187</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>$75</td>
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<td>Shona Macdonald</td>
<td>Art 697</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>$50</td>
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<td>Charlie Schweik</td>
<td>Env. Conserv. 409 &amp; 592</td>
<td>80 &amp; 30</td>
<td>$50 &amp; $50</td>
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<td>Pam Trafford</td>
<td>Management 630 &amp; 797</td>
<td>120 &amp; 40</td>
<td>$200 &amp; $200</td>
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The Open Education Initiative: Round Two

September 2011: Based on the success of the OEI the Provost and Director of Libraries co-fund a second round of 15 grants

October 2011: Round two launched during Open Access Week faculty panel presentation

November 2011: Workshops and consultations offered

December 2011: OEI review team awards 15 grants to 13 faculty members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Member</th>
<th>Course Offered</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Savings for Each Student</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allen Barker</td>
<td>Plant, Soil Sciences 530</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Patricia Bianconi</td>
<td>Chemistry 342</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td>Sergio Brena</td>
<td>Civil &amp; Envir. Eng. 433</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>$120</td>
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<td>Briankle Chang</td>
<td>Communication 318 &amp; 491</td>
<td>35 &amp; 45</td>
<td>$70 &amp; $50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Chilton</td>
<td>Anthropology 396</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>$75</td>
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<td>Lisa DePiano</td>
<td>Permaculture 197</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>$200</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Gerber</td>
<td>Plant, Soil Sciences 290</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>$122</td>
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<td>Christine Hatch</td>
<td>Geoscience 297</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>$100</td>
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<td>HK Hsieh</td>
<td>Statistics 501</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>$150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laetitia La Follette</td>
<td>Art History 100 &amp; 115</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>$175</td>
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<td>Daiheng Ni</td>
<td>Civil &amp; Envir. Eng. 520</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>$150</td>
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<td>Nicholas Reich</td>
<td>Public Health 590</td>
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The Open Education Initiative: Round Three

**October 2012:** Based on the success of the OEI, the Provost and Director of Libraries co-fund a third round of grants

**October 2012:** Round three launched during Open Access Week

**November 2012:** Workshops and consultations offered

**December 2012:** OEI review team awards grants for 14 plus 2 large general education classes

<table>
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<th>Faculty Member</th>
<th>Course Offered</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>Savings for Each Student</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kristin Avonti</td>
<td>Stockbridge School</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Patricia Gorman</td>
<td>Honor Seminar</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>$553</td>
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<td>Honors core course</td>
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<td>Irish Writers and Culture</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Peter Haas</td>
<td>Political Science 252 &amp; 253</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>$153</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kenneth Kitchell</td>
<td>Classics 100 &amp; 200</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>$82</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hossein Pishro-Nik</td>
<td>ECE 314</td>
<td>77</td>
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<td>ECE 603</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>$105</td>
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<td>Jing Qian</td>
<td>Public Health 680</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>$327</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joe Volpe</td>
<td>Env Design 291A</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>$220</td>
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<td>LARP 297A/597K</td>
<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brian Emond</td>
<td>Math 101, 102, 104</td>
<td>1700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heath Hatch</td>
<td>Physics 131, 132</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>$200</td>
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<td><strong>Total Round 3=$544,624</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>4,032 students</strong></td>
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Faculty Survey Results

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)
Faculty Comments

- “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.”
Benefits

- 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

- 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
Other Institutions

- Community Colleges in the United States:
  - Vermont
  - Massachusetts
  - Virginia
- Purdue University
- Universities in California System (UCLA, UCSD, CalPoly)
- University of Maryland, University of Wisconsin
- Wakeforest University
- And many liberal arts colleges
Next steps

- Sustainable staffing
- Copyediting, proofing expertise
- Marketing, publicity
- Assessment
Questions/Discussion

Contact Information

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