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The Open Education Initiative at UMass Amherst: Seeking Alternatives to High-cost Textbooks

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The Open Education Initiative at UMass Amherst:
Seeking Alternatives to High-cost Textbooks

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

- To provide small incentive grants to faculty to adopt alternatives to high-cost textbooks
  - Funded by Provost and University Libraries
    - Other partners as well

- To provide support infrastructure for creation and/or use of open educational resources and library content

- To engage T & L partners and faculty in open education
  - Academic Computing
  - Center for Teaching and Faculty Development
  - University Libraries
What are OERs?

• O is for Open – openly accessible
• E is Educational – learning
• R is for Resources – content
• Think Five Rs
  • Reuse - use freely for own purpose
  • Redistribute - share with others
  • Revise - adapt, modify, change
  • Remix - combine / transform
  • Retain: Users have the right to make, archive, and "own" copies of the content
Workshop & Consultation Process

• Two 1 hour workshops reviewing available Open Educational Resources and library resources
• Individual consulting sessions for faculty with Scholarly Communication librarians and partners as needed
• Topics covered: OER availability, copyright and licensing issues, accessibility concerns, creating a sustainable curriculum with OERs, managing resources in the LMS
OER includes

Curriculum
- Syllabi
- Content modules

Course materials
- Textbooks
- Assignments
- Simulations
- Learning objects
- Labs

Collections
- Journal articles
- E-books
- Art galleries
- Video libraries

Tools
- Software
- Calculators
- Analytics

And more!
HTTP://GUIDES.LIBRARY.UMASS.EDU/OER

Open Educational Resources Guide at UMass Amherst
Copyright and Author Rights

Two basic questions from faculty

• How do I protect my copyright on the works I create?
• How do I make sure I’m not infringing on the copyright of others?

Answer: It depends.

• How do you want your work to be used? What is it that you want out of this experience?
• Do you want other educators to be able to use it?
• Do you want to commercialize it?
• Do you want attribution?
Open Access and Fair Use

- Check the CC license to see how the creator would like something to be used.
- Exercise your fair use rights as academic educators and researchers.

Partners Providing OEI Support

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 9991, NCR 9992. 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 Schneider, Meil 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

Liaison Assignment

Peer-Review by:
CTFD
IT Program faculty
Librarians
OIT
OEI Grant: Faculty Proposals

- Basic course information
  - Number of students
  - Current textbook(s) and cost
- Anticipated implementation date
- Narrative (500 words)
  - Outcomes
  - Sustainability
  - Challenges
  - Assessment
Success Stories

Carlos Gradil
- Animal Sciences 421: Fundamentals of Reproduction
- Initial Cost Savings: $2,400

Miliann Kang
- Women’s Studies 187: Gender, Sexuality and Culture
- Initial Cost Savings: $22,500

Hossein Pishro-Nik
- Electrical and Computer Engineering 314: Introduction to Probability and Random Processes
- Initial Cost Savings: $14,630

Uses video to teach 3 different classes, a far superior teaching tool than text/static images

OERs downloaded over 3,600 times, far over initial class of 300 students

Used his book in 6 courses, representing 6 times projected savings ($87,700); other professors are using it too
Dollar savings to students with Open Education Initiative

- Predicted savings (# of students x expected text cost) each round 2011-1014
Assessment

Methods
- Surveys
- Qualitative interviews
- Enrollment numbers

Objectives
- Was there a cost savings?
- Did students learn effectively?
- Did faculty implement the parameters of the grant?

Results can be used for improvement and marketing.
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.
Outcomes

• Intended Outcomes
  • 50 faculty + over 85 classes taught = over $1 million saved for students
  • Course evaluations show same quality of student satisfaction, or better
  • Service points on campus are partnering for student success

• Unexpected Outcomes
  • Instructors using new teaching styles and flipping their classrooms
  • Increased awareness on campus and queries from instructors about OERs
  • Professors report students better prepared for class and more engaged
  • Created resources add to available open education resources for everyone
  • Relationships between service point partners are stronger
  • Student involvement and passion are stimulating change
Lessons Learned: What Worked

• Value of mini grants and peer review
• Meet faculty where they are – create cohorts
• Capitalize on library strengths and value of existing services
• Leverage complementary strengths of the partners
And What Didn’t, or “Challenges”

• Lack of knowledge by faculty
• Time consuming to find or develop OE content
• Lack of search tool or comprehensive catalog
• May lack prepared quizzes and other content
• Students may prefer print
• Time commitment from partners
• Getting beyond the “pilot” phase
Resources

• Babson Survey Research Group Report 2014
  http://www.onlinelearningsurvey.com/oer.html

• Horizon Report 2015

• Open Textbooks: The Billion-Dollar Solution
Student Advocacy

http://massspiringstudents.org/campaigns/ma/make-textbooks-affordable