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# Extending Open Textbook Network Workshop and Reviews to Include All OER and Library Materials

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The cost of higher education is a barrier for many students, keeping them from attaining their goals. While textbooks and course materials are just a small part of the total cost of attendance, this is the area where faculty can have a direct impact in lowering costs. By choosing openly licensed course materials, faculty can not only help students save money but also have complete control over customizing their curriculum. This article describes a workshop model that offers stipends for faculty to review open educational resources (OER), which increases the likelihood that they will go on to adopt OER in their courses. Librarians at Umpqua Community College (UCC) extended the workshop model, and their innovation is now being implemented statewide.

### **Depressing Data**

While the cost of college tuition and fees has increased 63 percent from 2006–2016, the cost of textbooks has increased by 87.5 percent (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). According to the 2016 Student Textbook and Course Materials Survey, this has negatively affected access, success, and completion in higher education: 66.6 percent of students reported not purchasing the required textbook, 37.6 percent reported earning a poor grade, and 19.8 percent reported failing a course due to cost. Students also reported occasionally or frequently taking fewer courses (47.6 percent), not registering for a course (45.5 percent), dropping a course (26.1 percent), or withdrawing from courses (20.7 percent) (Florida Virtual Campus, 2016).

The high cost of textbooks disproportionately affects community college students, 50 percent of whom use financial aid to purchase textbooks, as compared to 28 percent at public four-year colleges and 22 percent at private four-year institutions (Student PIRGs, 2016b). In Oregon, books and supplies are 8 percent of the total cost of attendance at community colleges, and 5 percent of the total cost of attendance at universities, reflecting the higher tuition costs at universities (Higher Education Coordinating Commission, 2018).

These barriers for students are amplified not only by high textbook costs but also predatory practices in use by the textbook industry such as access codes. Against the backdrop of increased public awareness of high prices and predatory practices, the textbook industry has shifted toward greater promotion of access codes. These offer the benefit of enabling students to use ebooks, quizzes, self-assessments, multimedia, and other ancillary content. However, they cost an average of \$100 and cannot be shared, sold back, bought used, or borrowed from course reserves—causing even more hardship for students (Student PIRGs, 2016a).

### **OER Help Solve These Problems**

OER are one option for increasing the affordability of course materials while allowing increased flexibility for faculty. The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (2018) defines OER as:

*teaching, learning and research materials in any medium—digital or otherwise—that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions.*

With the purpose of increasing student access and success at Oregon's community colleges, the State of Oregon's Higher Education Coordinating Commission funded Open



Oregon Educational Resources beginning in 2015. Open Oregon Educational Resources (<https://openoregon.org>) provides training and grants and fosters a community of practice surrounding OER in order to increase the affordability of course materials.

Research by Open Oregon Educational Resources found a measurable reduction in textbook costs at Oregon's community colleges from 2015–2017. Totalling over \$1 million in student savings, each of the 3,464 students who completed an Associate of Arts Oregon Transfer (AAOT) degree in 2017 saved approximately \$332.58. The average cost of course materials for the AAOT was reduced by 16 percent and the number of hours working at minimum wage required to purchase those course materials was reduced by 25 percent. Although tuition rose during this two-year period at most of the community colleges in Oregon, the cost of course materials as a percentage of tuition per credit hour for the AAOT decreased from 25.27 percent to 20.24 percent (Open Oregon Educational Resources, 2018).

Oregon community college librarians play an essential role in this process by helping faculty find suitable OER for their courses, advising them on copyright and Creative Commons licenses, formatting options, and connecting them with campus and statewide networks and resources to aid in the OER adoption process. Many librarians serve as Open Oregon Educational Resources' "OER point people" for each of Oregon's community colleges and universities. In this role, they disseminate news and professional development opportunities to their campuses, while providing a single point of contact for reporting and personnel questions.

### **Barriers to Use of OER**

In order to increase OER adoption, faculty need to be aware of available open resources and able to find quality course materials that fit the needs of their course. They also need time and support in order to redesign their courses to incorporate the openly licensed materials. Each of these needs may present a potential barrier to use.

The Babson Survey Research Group (2017) found that only 10 percent of faculty were "very aware" of OER and 20 percent were "aware." The Babson survey instrument has not been implemented in Oregon, but it is likely that our community college faculty would answer differently from this national sample, since anecdotally the authors have observed a high level of awareness statewide. However, there is still more that can be done to raise faculty awareness in Oregon.

Forty-seven percent of faculty in the Babson survey stated that there are "not enough resources on my subject" and 50 percent stated that it is "too hard to find what I need" (Babson Survey Research Group, 2017, p. 2). Additionally, the survey results demonstrated that OER can be successful "when you deal directly with the top faculty concerns of finding and evaluating potential OER options" in addition to providing print options, which have been shown to be preferred by students (Babson Survey Research Group, 2017, p. 3). These findings suggest that librarians can play a greater role in filtering and recommending OER, or determining when an empty search result reflects a real lack of resources.

Interestingly, the Babson survey found that a majority of faculty nationwide already consider cost when selecting course materials, that their average reported price for course



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materials is \$97, and that only 22 percent are “very satisfied” with this price. “It is therefore not surprising that most faculty report that not all of their students buy all the required texts for their class, with only a third saying that 90 percent or more of their students have purchased the required textbook” (Babson Survey Research Group, 2017, p. 2). Again, from an anecdotal perspective, the national data aligns with what is observed in Oregon colleges, where many faculty members consider cost when selecting materials and cite cost as a reason to switch to OER.

The benefits for students are clear, but it is still a lot of work to adopt OER as faculty often redesign their course when they change materials. Oregon community college full-time and part-time faculty who adopt OER generally do so on their own initiative in addition to their normal workload, with colleges providing varying levels of support and infrastructure during this process (e.g., access to an instructional designer). A minority of faculty who adopt OER are able to participate in statewide OER grant programs or receive internal funding from their institutions.

### **Open Textbook Network Workshop Model**

The Open Textbook Library (OTL), hosted by the University of Minnesota, plays a role in addressing these faculty needs. The library links to complete textbooks while also addressing quality, another key concern of faculty, by providing peer reviews. Textbooks included in the OTL must be openly licensed, available in a complete portable file, original works, and currently in use in an institution of higher education or affiliated with a professional or scholarly organization (Open Textbook Library, 2018). This is useful because it presents faculty with complete, downloadable, peer-reviewed textbooks that are essentially ready for adoption and can be printed and sold at college bookstores.

The Open Textbook Network (OTN), also housed at the University of Minnesota, is a professional organization that offers a train-the-trainer approach to reach individual faculty directly. The OTN created an open textbook workshop and review program. Faculty members are invited to attend an informational workshop about OER and to check the OTL to see whether there is a textbook that they might be interested in adopting. They are then eligible to receive a \$200 stipend for submitting a textbook review to be posted in the OTL under a Creative Commons Attribution license.

The reviews serve a two-fold purpose: faculty have the option to review the open textbook to see whether it would be useful for their own course. Their reviews aid other faculty in their decision-making process when considering adopting that open textbook. The OTL does not modify or copy edit the faculty reviews. There is no expectation that faculty will adopt the textbook after reviewing it. However, this often naturally leads faculty to adopt it if they found through their review that it would be suitable for their course.

In March 2016, Open Oregon Educational Resources invited Oregon community college librarians, faculty, and e-learning staff to an OTN train-the-trainer workshop. This training allowed attendees to, in turn, offer Open Textbook Review Workshops on their own campuses. The \$200 stipend for reviews completed by faculty who attend the workshops is usually paid by Open Oregon Educational Resources, with some stipends paid through internal funding sources. Between fall 2015 and spring 2018, 48 Open Textbook



Workshops were offered in Oregon's community colleges. The Umpqua Community College (UCC) library has offered these workshops several times per year since spring 2016.

These OTN review stipends were one of several types of grants and stipends awarded by Open Oregon Educational Resources with the intention of increasing OER adoption in Oregon's community colleges. Open Oregon Educational Resources found that for every program dollar spent, there was a student savings of \$14.06 as a result of the workshop stipends, which surpassed student savings for funds invested in other OER activities (Open Oregon Educational Resources, 2017). Clearly, the OTN workshop and review model is an effective one.

However, during the 2017–18 academic year, Open Oregon Educational Resources was unable to offer these grants because of a procurement delay. Based upon Open Oregon Educational Resources' finding that these review stipends had returned a high level of student savings per dollar invested, Carol McGeehon, Library Director at UCC, allocated \$2000 to be used to fund these reviews at UCC during the 2017–18 academic year. These Open Textbook Workshops and review stipends funded by the UCC Library were first offered during fall term 2017.

### **Extending the Model**

Over the years, several faculty had expressed interest in reviewing OER, but had not found a specific textbook in the OTL that met the needs of their course. Additionally, conversation in the OER community had long included options for combining different types of OER and other freely available library and web resources to replace commercial texts. This led UCC librarians to consider how they could expand the review workshop model to allow faculty to review other types of OER that were not in the OTL. These include resources such as open courses, assignments, tests, slides, and rubrics. Copyrighted, but freely available resources are also included, such as content on the open web, course materials available in Canvas Commons (through UCC's learning management system Canvas), and articles, ebooks, and streaming video available through the UCC Library.

Running parallel to this was the initiative across Oregon's community colleges and public universities to align their practices with Oregon HB 2871, requiring courses that used low cost and no cost course materials to be designated in the course schedule, where students can find this information at the point of registration. Beginning fall term 2017, all courses that met UCC's "No Cost Textbook" designation were indicated for students when they registered online (see Figures 1 and 2). This designation meant that there was no cost for all required materials for the course, including all required textbooks, course packs, and other text-based materials, workbooks, lab manuals, online homework platforms, access codes and other publisher-provided curricular materials.



## Registration

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### ADDING CLASSES

Online Registration is NOT available after the term begins. Once the term starts, registration must be completed in-person at the LaVerne Murphy Student Center.

### DROPPING CLASSES

Dropping a course or courses will not appear on your academic transcript IF completed during the first seven calendar days of the term. Any drops during that time over the weekend must be done through Student Self-Service ONLY as campus is closed those days.

### PAYING FOR CLASSES

**ⓘ PAYMENT DUE DATE (Fall term):** SEPT 24th, 2018 by 5:00 p.m.

For applicable charges & payment options, follow this link [PAYING FOR CLASSES](#) or click below to pay online.

- **PAY ONLINE:**

### TEXTBOOK COSTS

Classes with no cost or low cost required course materials are identified as follows:

- **No Cost Textbook:** All required course materials are completely free.
- **50 Dollars or Under Textbook:** The total cost of all required course materials is \$50 or less.

Beginning Spring Term 2018, required course materials included are textbooks and other text-based materials, workbooks, lab manuals, online homework platforms and special access codes. This does not include art supplies, calculators or other equipment, and any Course Fees. Also excluded are optional texts that students are not required to purchase for your course section.

**📖 More Information**  
Click on the **HELP** link above for more information about registration and deadlines.

[Select Term](#)  
[Add or Drop Classes](#)  
[Look Up Classes](#)

Figure 1. Textbook cost information in UCC's student information system (Banner) on the "Registration" page.



Sections Found																
Chemistry																
Select	CRN	Subj	Crse	Sec	Cmp	Cred	Title	Days	Time	Cap	Act	Rem	Instructor	Date (MM/DD)	Location	Attribute
NR	26354	CH	112	0	M	5.000	Fund-Chemistry-Lab Req'd	MW	04:00 pm-05:50 pm	48	44	4	TBA	09/24-12/01	HNSC 202	Natural Science and No cost textbook and On-line Supplemented
								MW	04:00 pm-05:50 pm				Joseph Villa (P)	09/24-12/01	HNSC 201	Natural Science and No cost textbook and On-line Supplemented
NR	26355	CH	112	0	M	0.000	Fund-Chemistry Lab	W	12:00 pm-02:50 pm	24	23	1	Joseph Villa (P)	09/24-12/01	HNSC 206	Natural Science and On-line Supplemented
NR	26356	CH	112	0	M	0.000	Fund-Chemistry Lab	T	06:00 pm-08:50 pm	24	21	3	Joseph Villa (P)	09/24-12/01	HNSC 206	Natural Science and On-line Supplemented

[ [Week at a Glance](#) | [Student Detail Schedule](#) | [View Fee Assessment](#) ]

Figure 2. “No Cost Textbook” course designation as it appears for an individual class in UCC’s student information system (Banner).

The UCC Library decided to allow faculty to review any combination of course materials, which, if they later chose to adopt them in place of their current commercial textbook, would enable their course to meet the “No Cost Textbook” course designation. These could include either OER or any resources that were freely available to students.

Following with the OTN model, there was no requirement for faculty to adopt any of the resources after completing their reviews. The review was to serve the purpose of allowing faculty to become familiar with the resources in order to determine whether they would be useful for their own course and to make recommendations to other faculty who were also looking for similar quality OER/freely available resources.

During the planning process, UCC librarians consulted with Amy Hofer from Open Oregon Educational Resources on considerations such as the stipend amounts, specific qualifications and processes for each stipend, content of e-mails to faculty, and options for posting non-OTL reviews since she has a statewide perspective and experience running her own Open Textbook Workshops at colleges around the state.

While the stipend for reviewing a textbook from the OTL was \$200, we recognized that it was substantially more work for a faculty member to find multiple OER and other freely available resources, which together would provide complete material for their course. Because of this, we offered a \$300 stipend for faculty who chose to review two or more resources. Additionally, we changed the name of these workshops from “Open Textbook Workshops” to “Faculty OER Workshops” because faculty would no longer need to exclusively review open textbooks.

Because we had a limited budget of \$2,000, we decided to prepare for the chance that we had more faculty sign up for our Faculty OER Workshops than we would be able to cover in our budget. We decided that in the event that we had to choose between faculty to






attend a workshop, we would determine which faculty to select based upon the following criteria: (1.) Whether the course is required for a program; (2.) Total annual enrollment in the course; (3.) Cost of the existing required course textbook which the OER could possibly replace (see Appendix A).

While we regularly send short lists of OER to faculty which we know may be of interest to them, when inviting faculty to the OER Faculty Workshops, we invited them to contact us for help finding OER/freely available resources to replace their current course materials (see Appendix B). Several faculty who could not find open textbooks that fit their courses in the OTL did take us up on this.

UCC had one faculty member review an online textbook from LibreTexts which was not from the OTL. We had another faculty member who found an online OER textbook that he felt would be useful for his course and who attended the workshop, but who did not end up writing a review.

After the extended workshop review model was successfully piloted at UCC, Amy began incorporating it into her faculty workshops statewide. It is now the standard in Oregon to offer the option of receiving a \$300 stipend for reviewing OER that are not a textbook, but that add up to an entire curriculum to replace traditionally published course materials.

The final step in the process was to determine where the faculty reviews of non-textbook OER/freely available resources should be posted (reviews for textbooks in the OTL could continue to be posted there). Following with the OTN, reviews will be published under a Creative Commons Attribution license. We decided to post them to at least one listserv (UCC chose to post its review to the CCCOER listserv) and also to post them to OER Commons. Amy created an OER Reviews folder under the Open Oregon Educational Resources OER Commons profile where the non-OTL reviews could be posted.

The UCC Library and Open Oregon Educational Resources will continue to offer these workshops and review stipends during the 2018–19 academic year. Public colleges and universities in Oregon can contact Amy Hofer about hosting a review workshop. 

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## **Appendix A**

Library Procedure for Faculty OER Workshop and Review

The COLLEGE NAME Library is offering stipends to COLLEGE NAME full-time and part-time faculty for the following:

### **\$200 STIPEND**

1. Faculty attend the Faculty OER Workshop offered by the COLLEGE NAME Library.
2. Faculty review a single OER that could possibly replace their existing required textbook and would, if adopted, allow their course to meet the “no cost textbook” designation requirements. The review is written according to the guidelines provided by the COLLEGE NAME Library. The review is submitted by the due date. The review will be posted by the COLLEGE NAME Library in relevant locations with a Creative Commons Attribution license.
3. Faculty complete a follow-up survey sent by the COLLEGE NAME Library by the due date.

### **\$300 STIPEND**

1. Faculty attend the Faculty OER Workshop offered by the COLLEGE NAME Library.
2. Faculty review a two or more OER that, if combined, could possibly replace their existing required textbook and would, if adopted, allow their course to meet the “no cost textbook” designation requirements. The review is written according to the guidelines provided by the COLLEGE NAME Library. The review is submitted by the due date. The review will be posted by the COLLEGE NAME Library in relevant locations with a Creative Commons Attribution license.



3. Faculty complete a follow-up survey sent by the COLLEGE NAME Library by the due date.

### CONDITIONS

The total number of stipends awarded may not exceed the library's budgeted amount for these stipends.

Faculty may sign-up for the Faculty OER Workshop with an intention to complete a review and survey and receive a stipend on a first come, first serve basis. In the case that more faculty request to sign-up for this opportunity than the library budget allows, the decision for which faculty shall receive the stipend will be made by the Library Director. The Library Director shall base their decision upon the impact that the possible adoption of the OER to be reviewed would have upon students at COLLEGE NAME. Factors that the Library Director will consider are:

- Whether the course is required for a program.
- Total annual enrollment.
- Cost of the existing required textbook for this course which the OER could possibly replace.

Created by the Umpqua Community College Library. March 2, 2018  
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

### Appendix B

Faculty OER Workshop: E-mail Invitation to Faculty

Subject: NEW: \$200–\$300 stipend to review OER for your course

### CONTENT

Dear COLLEGE NAME Faculty,

**Earn \$200–\$300 to review open educational resources (OER) for your course.**

**Help lower textbook costs for students**

Are you:

- Concerned about the impact of high textbook costs on your students?
- Looking for a way to ensure your students have access to your text from day 1 of the term?
- Interested in remixing content to customize your course material?

Explore possible OER solutions by attending a workshop, writing a review of one or more OER to replace your current textbook, and taking a follow-up survey. Receive a \$200-\$300 stipend for your efforts!

**\$200 Stipend:** Review a single OER that, if adopted for your course, would make all of your required course materials free.

**\$300 Stipend:** Review two or more OER that, if combined and adopted for your course, would make all of your required course materials free.



### WHAT OER CAN I REVIEW?

Examples of course materials that could be combined to replace a textbook might be:

- Open textbooks
- Open courses
- Courses and other resources from Canvas Commons
- Open assignments, tests, slides, rubrics
- eBooks from the COLLEGE NAME Library (these are not open, but are freely available to students)
- Websites
- Wikis

We want to allow faculty to consider any combination of these resources which would allow them to replace their commercial texts.

To qualify for the stipend, the combination of OER reviewed, if adopted, would remove the costs for all required materials for the course, including all required textbooks, course packs, and other text-based materials, workbooks, lab manuals, online homework platforms, access codes and other publisher-provided curricular materials.

Faculty are NOT required to adopt the OER which they review.

### What you can do to receive a stipend

- **Step 1:** Register for the workshop.
- **Step 2:** Choose OER to review. You may quickly check the Open Textbook Library to find entire open textbooks to review. Contact LIBRARIAN NAME for help finding multiple OER for your course.
- **Step 3:** Attend the Faculty OER Workshop.
- **Step 4:** Write a review of the OER. This review must be completed by 8 WEEKS FROM WORKSHOP DATE. Your review will be posted under a Creative Commons Attribution license on websites (e.g., Open Textbook Library, Open Oregon Educational Resources) or listservs for faculty interested in OER adoption.
- **Step 5:** After submitting your review, complete the follow-up survey that will be sent to you via e-mail.
- **Stipend:** You'll receive a stipend for your participation in the workshop, completed written review, and completion of the follow-up survey.

**What:** Faculty OER Workshop

**When:**

**Where:**

**Who:** The workshop will be led by LIBRARIAN NAME.

**NOTE:** Come early for coffee and feel free to bring your lunch!

This workshop and review stipend is sponsored by LIBRARY NAME.

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