
Role of Campus Community in Open Educational Resources: The Benefits of Building a Collaborative Relationship with Campus IT and Distance Education Departments

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ABSTRACT

Campus partnerships are an increasingly common and dynamic entity on college campuses. To successfully achieve institutional goals, campus partners must collaborate and create communities of practice. Open educational resources (OER) is a rapidly growing area in higher education due to the increasing costs of attending college and increased student debt. By providing access to OER, colleges are supporting student success, increasing retention of students, and, most importantly, contributing to reducing students' higher education debt. OER initiatives often fall under the purview of the academic library. While the library is an excellent place to start an affordable learning initiative, identifying pertinent campus partners and forming communities of practice will improve awareness of OER and increase OER adoption. This study utilized a survey to identify levels of current awareness and adoption of OER among faculty at a master's comprehensive four-year public university in Pennsylvania. The goal was to provide a benchmark for assessing future progress. It also provided structure and a programming plan for a newly developed collaboration between the library, distance education, and Information Services & Technology. Survey results assisted the partnership in identifying ways to collaborate and implement strategies to increase awareness and adoption of OER on campus.

INTRODUCTION

Open educational resources (OER) and affordable learning are important and timely initiatives in higher education. As the cost of higher education increases and student loan debt is at a high, educators and students have looked to alternatives for costly textbooks (Baum 2018; Bernard 2019; DiStefano 2018; Maldonado 2018; Seltzer 2017; Smith 2016; U.S.

Bureau of Labor Statistics 2016). The Hewlett Foundation (2020), an organization that has supported open education since 2002, defines OER as “high-quality teaching, learning, and research materials that are free for people everywhere to use and repurpose.” As defined by Creative Commons (2020), OER are “teaching, learning, and research materials that are either (a) in the public domain or (b) licensed in a manner that provides everyone with free and perpetual permission to engage in the 5R activities.” The common defining principle of OER is *free to use*. When teaching, learning, and research materials are free to obtain and use, the affordability of education is increased. Affordable learning frequently appears as a broader initiative, encompassing the administrative and political efforts of local and federal organizations. Most recently, the Affordable College Textbook Act was reintroduced to Congress with the specific goal of expanding “the use of open textbooks in order to achieve savings for students and improve textbook price information” (Schmelzer 2019; U.S. Congress 2019). OER and affordable learning are not synonymous; they are mutually compatible, each supporting the other in sustainable efforts to reduce the high costs of education. OER is an important piece of the larger affordable learning landscape. It is necessary for individuals at colleges and universities to step in and work toward implementing programs, initiatives, and policies at the local level to encourage and support the larger affordable learning initiatives.

Some states and consortia, such as the State University of New York (SUNY) OER Services, Ohio’s OpenEd Collaborative, and Virginia’s VIVA, have been leading efforts in the United States and providing valuable expertise and resources for OER. The Scholarly Publishing and Academic Research Coalition (SPARC) tracks OER policies and initiatives in the United States, identifying that “more than half of all U.S. states have considered OER legislation in past year” (SPARC 2019). Pennsylvania, however, has not passed legislation requiring or encouraging the use of OER in educational institutions across the state. Much of the work is still at the organizational level. The largest initiative is through a grant-funded program, Affordable Learning Pennsylvania (Affordable Learning PA), which is working with colleges and universities in the state to promote and increase adoption of OER on campus.

The author is from a midsized regional state university in Pennsylvania that has spent the last two years leading some of the first steps toward promoting OER awareness and adoption on campus. The author was appointed by the dean of the library to chair the library’s OER committee. The committee was initially tasked with the goal of increasing OER awareness on campus. To be successful, the committee identified that we would need to achieve two things: conduct OER presentations on campus and identify campus partnerships.

One of the first partnerships the library OER Committee identified was

with the Office of Distance Education. As a member of the library OER committee and the library liaison for distance education, the distance education librarian identified an e-textbook initiative through the Office of Distance Education. The goal of this ongoing initiative, established in 2017, is to replace or supplement costly textbooks with low-cost or free electronic textbooks. Faculty receive a call for participation and apply for a stipend to develop and author an e-textbook. The commitment requires making the textbook freely available to university students, and the faculty have the option to share their work beyond their institution. Because this initiative aligned directly with our committee goals, it presented a clear and obvious opportunity to form a partnership. We reached out to the lead for the e-textbook initiative to begin to establish a collaborative relationship and share our ideas.

While the Office of Distance Education Services is housed within Academic Affairs, it is heavily supported by the Office of Information Services & Technology (IS&T). Since the e-textbook initiative was using campus technology to create the texts, IS&T was involved. When the library distributed the survey, described in this article, collecting information from faculty on OER, a natural collaborative relationship was born.

It became apparent to individuals in charge of each initiative that there were departments on campus working separately toward similar goals involving OER. Professionals from all departments felt that by working together in a partnership, we could improve upon and increase our efforts. All three campus partners—library, distance education, and IS&T—formed a mutual and productive campus partnership to develop a community of practice surrounding OER. Using data from the library's OER survey, information from the e-textbook initiative, and the technical knowledge of IS&T, the departments began meeting to discuss our projects and goals and find ways to work together.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Campus Community Partnerships

Strategic goals and objectives can often be achieved through collaborative work and partnerships. Higher education institutions are a notable example of this style of work. Whether in small groups or large teams, individuals and departments come together with a common interest to achieve a goal. As enrollment demographics change—for example, the rise in diverse student populations such as first-generation college students—so do institutional priorities and goals. It has become important for campus partners to work together to achieve institutional goals such as student success programs, first year experience programs, and even OER initiatives.

Colleges and universities are increasingly adopting communities of practice (CoPs) models on their campuses to develop policies and imple-

ment programs and initiatives to meet changing needs and challenges. Wegner (1998, 45) defined CoPs as social relations “created over time by the sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise.” Aimed at working collaboratively in a social manner, professionals and individuals with shared interests and goals are forming CoPs to have dialogue and generate ideas to work toward achieving a common goal (Buckley and Strydom 2015; Kezar and Gehrke 2017; McAlister 2016). Frequently, CoPs in higher education are formed under institutional missions or strategic initiatives that involve assessment and review of programs or curricula (Annala and Mäkinen 2017; Gehrke and Kezar 2017). Campus partners are finding it more productive to meet institutional goals when they work together to achieve success in these areas. When libraries engage in effective collaboration with campus partners, they are “able to extend the impact of the library far beyond the library’s physical spaces or online presence” (Goodsett, Loomis, and Miles 2016, 335).

The most recent scholarship on campus partner collaboration or CoPs surrounds student success initiatives. Student success is at the forefront of much of the strategic planning and literature at higher education institutions. When student success supports are in place, such as tutoring and advising services, employment preparation, and evidence-based teaching, students will be more successful at college and in their career path (Mintz 2019).

The work that libraries do is woven throughout student success initiatives. As libraries seek and establish partnerships with campus offices, groups, or programs, student success and retention improve (Gaha, Hinnefeld, and Pellegrino 2018; Grallo, Chalmers, and Baker 2012; Jackson, Hansen, and Fowler 2005; Soria, Fransen, and Nackerud 2014). Most frequently, the literature identifies campus partner collaborations between the library and the writing center (Brady et al. 2009; Cooke and Bledsoe 2008; Escobar and Gauder 2015; Ferer 2012; Jackson 2017; Mahaffy 2008; Montgomery and Robertshaw 2015; Palomino and Gouveia 2011; Zauha 2014). This is a common partnership of two mutually compatible departments on campus. Combining service models, the library and writing center can contribute to student success goals by improving information literacy and writing skills (Cooke and Bledsoe 2008; Ferer 2012; Jackson 2017; Mahaffy 2008; Peterson and Budinsky 2015). Another popular campus partner relationship involves information literacy programming and development between librarians and teaching faculty, teaching and learning campus groups, educational committees, and even student affairs. These connections contribute to improved grade point averages, increased retention, and overall student success (Gaha, Hinnefeld, and Pellegrino 2018; Grallo, Chalmers, and Baker 2012; Jackson, Hansen, and Fowler 2005; Soria, Fransen, and Nackerud 2014). While campus-library collaborations most frequently involve information literacy programming with teaching

faculty and writing centers, libraries also develop unique partnerships in other areas such as advising, career centers, counseling, and other specific departments and programs like First Year Experience and learning support programs (Grallo, Chalmers, and Baker 2012; Mounce and Claunch 2018; Smith, McGraw, and Vecchione 2018).

Many of these collaborations and initiatives involve analyzing and assessing an area of need or an identified problem so as to improve the service or initiative. One major aspect of student success is reducing financial and academic barriers (Mintz 2019). Establishing CoPs to support successful adoption and creation of OER directly reduces financial barriers to student success. Enrollment demographics have changed in the last five years, with an increase in nontraditional and first-generation students (NASPA 2018). This has occurred alongside record increases in the cost of attending college and data showing increased debt of students and graduates. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2019b), the cost of attending a four year public institution was 12 percent higher in the 2017–18 academic year than in 2010–11. It was 16 percent higher for private institutions (NCES 2019b). Unfortunately, the NCES (2019a) also reports a 5 percent decline in financial aid awards, and overall there have been significant funding cuts at state institutions (Mitchell, Leachman, and Saenz 2019). Combining the high cost of a college education with reduced financial aid is leaving students with exorbitant debt.

Colleges and universities are seeking ways to attract and retain students while lowering tuition costs without compromising educational value (Allen 2010; DiStefano 2018; Jensen and Nackerud 2018). A notable area that is getting a lot of attention is textbooks. The cost of textbooks has risen three times the rate of inflation, nearly 82 percent in the last ten years (Bidwell 2014; Senack 2014). The textbook market is not competitive, and publishers rely on frequently published new editions as well as software bundles and access codes that limit the ability of students to resell their textbooks (Bidwell 2014). The rise in textbook costs has contributed to the financial stress and debt of college students (Perry 2016; Senack 2014; Zomer 2007). Students find they are forced to make difficult choices between purchasing a required textbook or securing food. (Senack 2014).

The move toward OER has become a powerful initiative on campuses to counteract the financial concerns and strains of attending college. The most recent survey of OER adoption and use reports that slightly more than half of faculty (53 percent) in the United States have some level of awareness of OER, and the number of faculty adopting OER as required materials has nearly tripled since 2015–16 (Seaman and Seaman 2020). As open access (OA) and OER initiatives increase in popularity and as institutions adopt OA models, campus partners must leverage the benefits of collaborating to achieve success in the awareness, promotion, and adoption of OER.

Campus OER Partnerships

For OER to become a strong and sustainable program in higher education, it is imperative to have institutional buy-in and partnerships at all levels. Campus partnerships that serve as a strong foundation for OER might include faculty who use OER, librarians, and other campus departments that market and support OER. Most importantly, the commitment of college and university administration to campus partnerships will serve as a necessary and strong foundation for OER. Surveys and data are showing a steady rise in awareness of OER in higher education. In an annual report about educational resources in higher education, a significant increase in OER awareness was reported from 2017 to 2018 (Seaman and Seaman 2018). The 2017 report found that out of 2,700 faculty responses, 10 percent reported being “very aware” of OER (Seaman and Seaman 2017, 16–17). Just one year later, the survey had 4,000 responses and 13 percent reported being “very aware” of OER (Seaman and Seaman 2018, 8). Overall awareness increased only 1 percent in the last two years from 45 (2017) to 46 percent (2018); however, faculty reporting no awareness dropped (Seaman and Seaman 2018). Awareness is increasing slowly but steadily. By establishing CoP regarding OER, campus partners can work together to form an identity, establish goals, make connections, and take advantage of valuable expertise, all of which will increase the rate of awareness.

Since libraries serve as a repository of knowledge and resources on college campuses, they are often the primary department or point of contact to raise awareness and form OER initiatives on campus. However, they are not traditionally a part of the decision-making process about textbooks and course materials. Therefore, it is important for libraries to seek out and develop campus partnerships. With access to diverse resources and progressive attitudes toward open education, librarians have established themselves at the forefront of affordable learning campaigns and become leaders in these efforts. Individual librarians or a team of library professionals work to raise awareness, increase adoption, and support publishing of OER on their campuses (Bell 2015; Goodsett, Loomis, and Miles 2016). Nontraditional library hires are on the rise, most notably in positions that are responsible for digital collections or initiatives, including institutional repositories, OA publishing, and OER (Wilder 2017). Many academic libraries have created professional librarian positions that directly support OER or OA initiatives (Bell 2015). These professionals are directly responsible for launching or improving campus initiatives for OER. While librarians are capable of raising awareness for OER, forming CoPs can increase awareness more quickly and improve adoption of OER resources.

To successfully implement OER initiatives, libraries must find ways to engage and collaborate with campus partners. This often takes the form of working with faculty one-on-one or in small groups (Katz 2019). Faculty incentive programs, often led and administered by the library, are frequently

the primary method for engagement in OER (Allen, Bell, and Billings 2014; Katz 2019; Salem 2017). Grant-funded partnership programs exist at colleges and universities throughout the United States. Popular current practice includes institutional grants or awards or offering monetary incentives to faculty for adoption and/or creation of OER. Salem (2017) also identified professional development programs, OER repositories, and course reserves and common methods for how libraries engage faculty in awareness and adoption of affordable course content. Salem further identified common library partners in OER initiatives. Besides faculty, they include the student government, bookstore, teaching and learning groups, and information technology/computing departments. The University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee led an OER initiative with the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) as well their Accessibility Resource Center, the bookstore, and the Student Association (Woodward 2017). Temple University established an alternate textbook project with the Teaching, Learning and Technology Roundtable (TLTR) on campus (Allen, Bell, and Billings 2014). The University of Massachusetts at Amherst quickly followed suit with a similar project encouraging faculty to adopt or author OER (Allen, Bell, and Billings 2014). This partnership included the library, academic computing, and the Center for Teaching and Faculty Development. Lehman College, part of the City University of New York (CUNY) system, established a zero textbook cost program in 2016 (Katz 2019). Library support in all of these initiatives included financial awards for faculty.

OER, Libraries, and Information Technology Departments

Information technology (IT) offices and departments tend to have professional and technical barriers with other campus departments. The literature shows that their relationships and work can be complex and misunderstood (Bedard et al. 2012; Cain 2003; Hoover 2018). Technology is pervasive in contemporary higher education, so IT professionals are necessary to maintain the operation of technical systems as well as provide learning support for using technology. As libraries have transitioned from repositories of print resources to providers of electronic and digital resources, librarians need more technical knowledge and support. Both IT and libraries respond to user needs with a common purpose—to assist the campus community, answer questions, and solve problems. Yet both do so with different skills, sets of tools, and professional knowledge.

Both the library and IT have beneficial resources and knowledge that can provide essential support for increasing awareness and adoption of OER on college campuses. The most obvious connection between IT and OER involves the technical challenges that may occur with adopting OER. IT can assist campus partners, including the library, with these challenges. Both are already structured to directly support students and

faculty. The library has strong connections with teaching faculty and backgrounds in research and subject areas. IT has deep knowledge of formats and systems and strong tech support skills. By identifying challenges and defining goals on a common project, the library and IT departments can strengthen their relationships and, more importantly, promote their goals through shared expertise (Bedard et al. 2012; Cain 2003). Establishing a community of practice between libraries, IT departments, and faculty can significantly improve awareness and adoption of OER as well as reduce barriers to adoption and use of OER (Hatzipanagos and Gregson 2015).

Access to resources is a concern in the forefront of the gathering and dissemination of OER (Navarrete and Luján-Mora 2018; Ovadia 2019). Steven Ovadia (2019) identified technical challenges that may affect functionality and occur when using and sharing OER including file format, compatibility with software, and user technical and pedagogical issues. While Creative Commons (CreativeCommons.org) encourages the five Rs of OER (Wiley 2014)—retain, reuse, revise, remix, and redistribute—the “content must be accessible to be reused and redistributed” (Ovadia 2019, 82). Technical librarians, such as systems and electronic resource librarians, as well as professionals in IT offices on campus can work closely to address accessibility issues with OER. Some literature suggests that OER are not truly “open” if they require proprietary software to open them, if editing or revision challenges exist due to software or licensing restrictions, or if users lack the technical expertise to revise or reuse the material (Atenas, Havemann, and Priego 2014; Ovadia 2019). While libraries can assist with locating, assessing, and instructing about OER, IT departments can assist with educating faculty regarding using and revising OER. While libraries often have staff with skills and expertise in this area, sharing this responsibility divides the work and strengthens the partnership. Both departments can then bring their expertise together in a CoP to launch OER awareness campaigns. Educators using OER may have difficulty due to not just the specific technology or software of the OER, but their individual level of technical expertise (Ovadia 2019; Scanlon 2012). Additionally, IT professionals can test and troubleshoot accessibility issues with OER and librarians can work on descriptive metadata to improve access to OER (Greene 2018; Navarrete and Luján-Mora 2018).

Two additional departments and/or positions that are interconnected in the library-IT-OER relationships are distance education and instructional designers. OER offer a particularly positive option for online and distance education programs in higher education. Due to their flexibility and ease of use in an online environment, OER can provide readily available, affordable course content to enrolled students. Hatzipanagos and Gregson (2015) identified several benefits of OER use in online and distance education, including the ability to serve distance students effectively, engage learners in digital resources, and establish new impact measures.

Due to the levels of technology utilized in online learning environments, IT departments play a significant role in supporting those programs and the faculty who teach in them.

The learning design of OER can present challenges as learning content technologies improve and update at a rapid rate (Hatzipanagos and Gregson 2015). Nascimbeni and Burgos (2016) write about the importance of establishing a philosophy around the “open educator” who is concerned with both the objects and practices involved in teaching and learning with OER resources. Instructional designers are important professionals at colleges and universities who can offer exceptional knowledge and assistance for “open educators” integrating OER into their course content. Nascimbeni and Burgos’s framework for open educators provides a tool to design, provide content, teach, and assess OER in a holistic way to “improve the teaching process and the learners accessibility and performance” (2016, 4) within the institutional mission, strategic plan, and overall learning culture. Developing OER or redesigning course content “helps faculty deepen their pedagogy” and improve engagement with students (Katz 2019, 388). The instructional designer is an integrative and almost essential support for faculty in the adoption of OER as the faculty recreate course content and curricula. The potential for librarian and instructional designer collaboration is immense, as librarians utilize their expertise in searching repositories and finding resources, and instructional designers use their expertise in adapting and changing course content to support learning in a meaningful way (Katz 2019; Misra 2013). Even more powerful is the CoP that can be established between the library and IT, if distance education, instructional designers, and other important research, technical, and learning stakeholders are included.

METHODOLOGY

The library was new to working on initiatives to improve awareness for open education. It was clear that an appropriate first step for the OER Committee was to perform an environmental scan to determine the faculty’s level of OER awareness and to establish a baseline for identifying needs and establishing goals. By identifying levels of awareness and adoption on our campus, we could establish a foundation for promotion of OER activities on our campus. The survey, initiated and conducted by the library, focused on gathering feedback from all university faculty regarding levels of OER awareness. It was disseminated to all full-time tenure-track, full-time tenured, and adjunct faculty. The survey was designed to identify the following evidence:

- Identify the level of faculty awareness of OER
- Identify faculty use or creation of OER
- Identify faculty awareness of library supports for affordable and open

education such as course reserve, the digital repository, and the library's OER LibGuide

- Identify faculty interested in learning more about OER

To gather this information, the author created an online survey using Qualtrics software. Qualtrics was also used to gather and analyze survey responses. The survey (see table 1) included eleven closed-response questions and two open-ended questions. Not every question in the survey required an answer, so response numbers varied slightly per question.

Table 1. Survey questions and available responses.

Survey Questions	Available Responses
Question 1: What is your awareness of OER?	I am not aware of OER I have heard of OER but would like to know more I have heard of and looked at OER, but am not sure how to use them I know a lot about OER
Question 2: Have you used OER?	Yes No Not sure
Question 3: If you have used OER, please select all classes that apply:	Undergraduate, on-campus (in-person) Graduate, on-campus (in-person) Undergraduate, online (distance ed.) Graduate, online (distance ed.) Undergraduate, branch campus Graduate, branch campus
Question 4: Have you created or published your own OER?	Yes No Not sure
Question 5: From the list, please select what you feel is the biggest barrier to using OER:	Difficult to find what I need or want Not high quality Not current or up-to-date There is a lack of options or resources for my discipline It takes too much time
Question 6: Do you provide a copy of your course materials to be put on reserve at the libraries?	Yes No I was not aware of this option
Question 7: What is the average cost of textbooks for your class?	\$0–50 \$51–100 \$101–150 \$151–200 \$201 or greater I do not know how much my textbooks cost
Question 8: How important is cost when choosing your course materials?	Extremely important Moderately important Slightly important Not important

continued

Survey Questions	Available Responses
Question 9: Are you aware of the University Libraries Digital Commons site?	Yes, I have heard of it and used it Yes, I have heard of it but have not visited the site No, I am not aware of it
Question 10: Would you be interested in attending a workshop about OER hosted by the library?	Yes Maybe No
Question 11: Are you?:	Tenured Tenure-track Adjunct (FT) Adjunct (PT)
Question 12: If you have used OER, consider providing more information including department, class, or type of material used (textbook, media, manual, etc.). Feel free to include links to resources used:	Open-ended response
Question 13: If you have created or published OER, consider providing a list of the resources you have published or created:	Open-ended response

In December 2018, the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the proposed survey and granted an exemption from review. In January 2019, the library dean disseminated a link to the survey via an all-faculty campus email distribution list. The email included a cover letter explaining the purpose and importance of the survey. The distribution list included all full-time and adjunct faculty ($N=980$) as well as both tenured and tenure-track faculty employed in spring 2019. Two reminders were sent out via the email distribution list, and the survey closed in March 2019. No incentives were offered for responding to the survey.

RESULTS

Demographics

Out of 980 faculty, 171 (17 percent) completed the survey, 142 (14 percent) of whom identified their faculty status. The majority of responses (75 percent) were from full-time faculty, comprising 41 percent tenured faculty and 35 percent tenure-track faculty. The remaining 25 percent of responses were from adjunct faculty, with 6 percent identifying as full-time adjunct and 18 percent as part-time adjunct.

OER Awareness and Adoption

The first five questions of the survey were created to evaluate faculty awareness and adoption of OER on campus. The results also established a baseline by which to measure growth of awareness and adoption of OER. Respondents were first asked about their level of awareness of OER. This

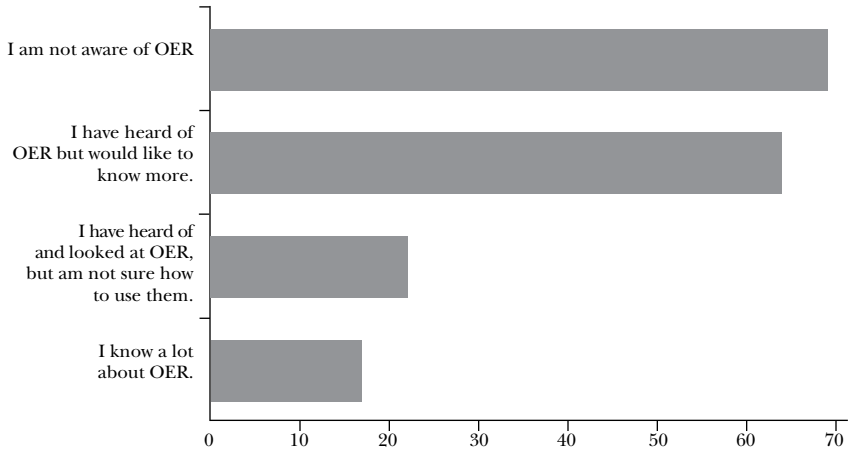


Figure 1. What is your awareness of OER?

question resulted in the greatest number of survey responses ($N = 171$). As shown in figure 1, of the 171 responses, 40 percent responded that they were not aware of OER, and 37 percent had heard about OER but wanted to learn more about them. In addition, 13 percent were aware of OER and responded that they had spent time looking at OER but were not sure how to use them. Of the 171 respondents, 10 percent selected that they were extremely knowledgeable about OER.

A follow-up question asking faculty to identify their biggest barriers to using OER yielded 128 responses. As shown in figure 2, the majority of faculty (46 percent) reported that it was difficult to find what they needed or wanted to use in their courses. The next two biggest barriers identified were a lack of options or resources for their specific discipline (22 percent) and that it takes too much time to adopt OER (21 percent). Last, 10 percent of faculty believed OER are not high quality and 1 percent (one respondent) believed that OER are not current or up to date.

A total of 164 respondents answered whether or not they had used OER in their courses (see figure 3); 15 percent selected that they had used OER, 55 percent selected that they had not used OER, and 30 percent selected that they were unsure if they had used OER. For faculty who selected that they had used OER, question 3 in the survey was used to identify classes where OER had been or was currently being used. Forty-four faculty responded to this question, with twenty-eight (64 percent) selecting undergraduate on campus (in-person), six (14 percent) selecting graduate on-campus in-person, three (7 percent) selecting undergraduate online distance education, three (7 percent) selecting graduate online distance education, two (5 percent) selecting undergraduate branch campus, and two (5 percent) selecting graduate branch campus.

The survey also identified faculty who had created or published their

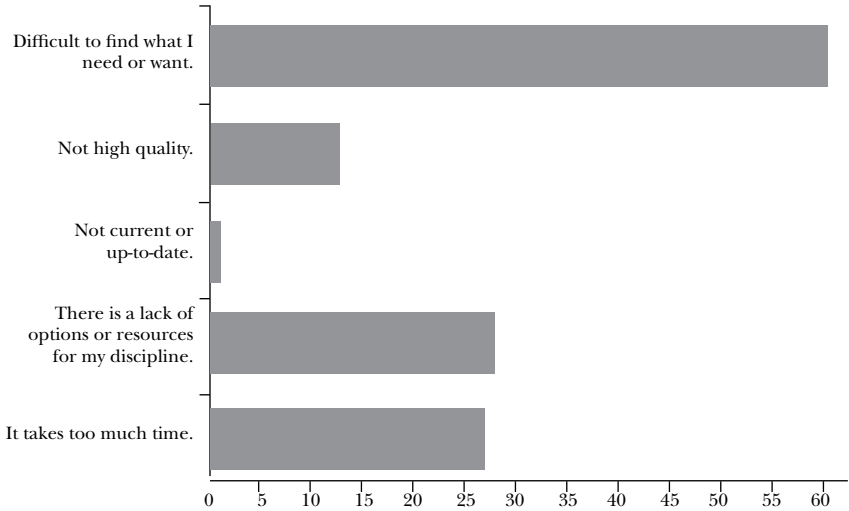


Figure 2. From the list, please select what you feel is the biggest barrier to using OER:

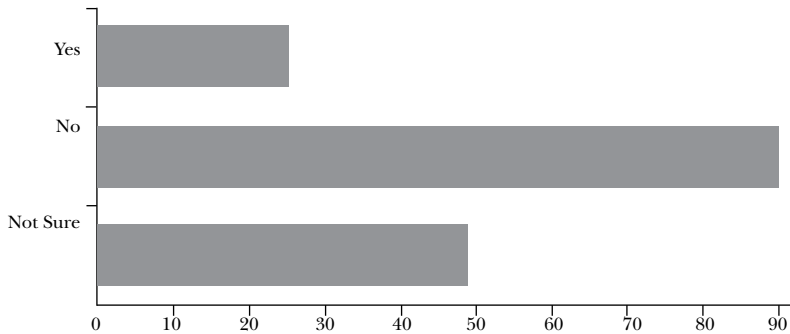


Figure 3. Have you used OER?

own OER. Of the 162 faculty who answered question 4, the large majority (82 percent, $n = 133$) responded that they had not created or published their own OER. Of the respondents, 6 percent ($n = 9$) identified themselves as having created or published their own OER, and the remaining 12 percent ($n = 20$) selected that they were not sure if they had created or published their own OER.

Affordable Learning Awareness

The next five questions in the survey were created to identify faculty awareness of library resources related to affordable learning, awareness of course material costs, and faculty interest in an OER workshop.

In order to identify awareness of the course reserves option at the libraries, the survey asked respondents if they provided course materials for reserves. In all, 144 faculty responded to question 6. Only 18 percent ($n = 26$) of faculty reported that they had provided course materials for library reserves. The majority (53 percent, $n = 76$) reported that they did not provide course materials for library reserves. Following that response, 29 percent ($n = 42$) faculty reported that they did not know course reserves was an option.

To gauge faculty awareness of textbook costs and to provide a measure for evaluating future savings in relation to OER adoption, questions were asked regarding textbook costs. Question 7 gathered data on what faculty believed was the average cost of textbooks for their course. Options included five price ranges of increasing cost and a sixth option that the faculty member did not know the cost of textbooks or materials for their course. Figure 4 shows the price range options and the number of faculty who selected each range. Of the 144 faculty who responded to this question, the greatest number (38 percent) reported textbook costs between \$51 and \$100 followed by 31 percent reporting \$0 to \$50. As the option for textbook costs increased, the number of faculty responding declined. In all, 15 percent selected \$101 to \$150, 7 percent selected \$151 to \$200, and 5 percent selected \$201 or greater. In addition, 5 percent of faculty selected that they did not know how much their textbooks cost.

Question 8 (see figure 5) asked faculty how important cost was in selecting textbooks for courses, and the majority responded either extremely important (51 percent) or moderately important (40 percent). Also, 6

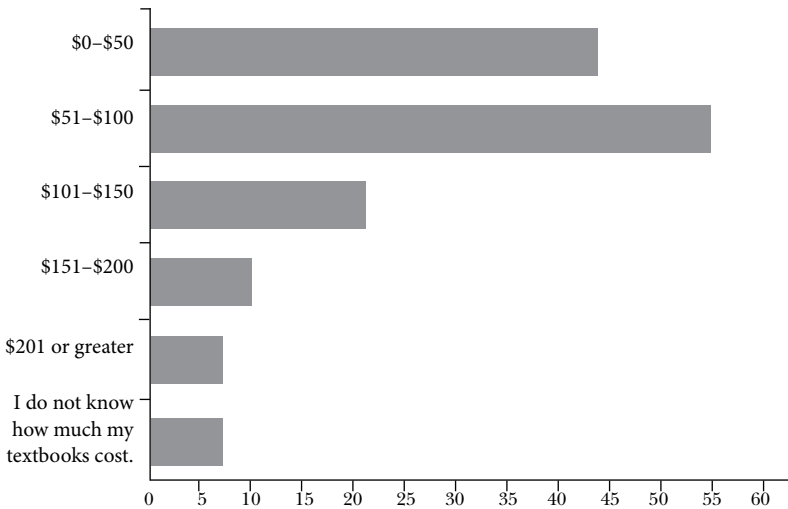


Figure 4. What is the average cost of textbooks for your class?

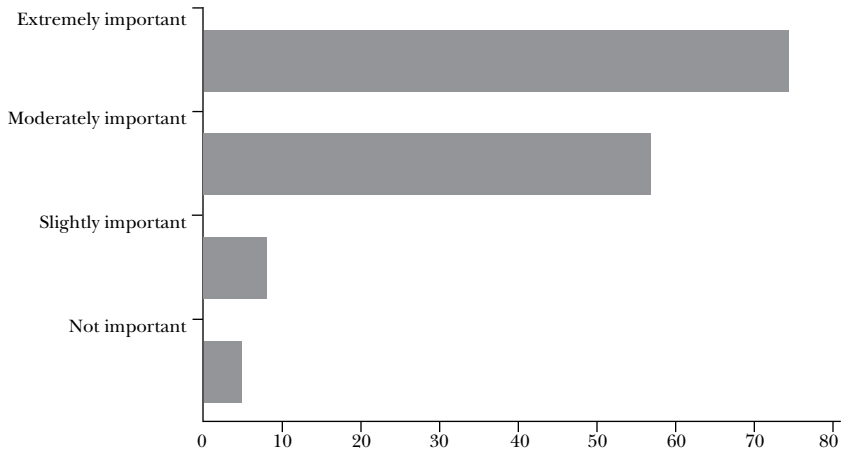


Figure 5. How important is cost when choosing your course materials?

percent selected that cost was slightly important, and 3 percent selected that cost was not important.

Question 9 gauged awareness of the library's institutional repository (IR), as it has become a means for collecting, hosting, and identifying OER on campus. Along with a LibGuide for OER, the IR is an important place for faculty to publish and access affordable learning or OER content. More than half of the respondents either had heard of the IR but not visited the site (47 percent, $n = 67$) or had heard of and used the IR site (19 percent, $n = 28$). Of the 142 respondents, 47 (33 percent) reported they were not aware of the IR at all.

Question 10 was used to gauge interest in a workshop centered on OER. Faculty were asked if they would be interested in attending a library-hosted OER workshop. The majority of respondents selected yes ($n = 62$) or maybe ($n = 68$), and only twelve faculty responded no. With 44 percent interested and 48 percent maybe interested in attending a workshop, it is apparent that this would be a useful future strategy for increasing OER awareness on campus.

Identifying Use or Creation of OER

The final two questions in the survey were open-ended response questions asked in order to gather specific OER resources, materials, or textbooks faculty either were using or had published. Question 12 prompted the respondent to consider providing specific information relating to open content they had used. Twelve faculty opted to provide more information. The most frequently used resources or materials were freely available streaming media or government documents, especially related to public health. Two faculty identified using a combination of materials includ-

ing OA articles and parts of open textbooks. Three faculty identified a specific open textbook they had assigned and used for a class. Question 13 prompted respondents to consider providing OER they had published or created. Five faculty answered the question, with only two having published a complete textbook. One of the two faculty published their text in collaboration with the Office of Distance Education e-textbook initiative. One of the five faculty identified themselves as a coeditor of an OA journal, and one faculty created streaming materials using Creative Commons licensing.

DISCUSSION

The results of the faculty survey drove discussion and collaboration between the library, IS&T, and Distance Education in a CoP structure. The data demonstrated that the primary goal on campus was to increase awareness. The results of the survey aligned with national survey results regarding faculty awareness of OER. Nationally, overall awareness of OER grew from 34 percent in 2014–15 to 46 percent in 2017–18 (Seaman and Seaman 2018). However, even though research is showing a steady increase in OER awareness among faculty, they are still largely not knowledgeable about OER. The majority of data are still showing that faculty are unaware of OER, as 54 percent reported in 2017–18 (Seaman and Seaman 2018). Given that 40 percent of our respondents were not aware of OER, this helped to focus our priority. It was clear that we needed to embark on an awareness campaign to disseminate facts and knowledge to our faculty.

CoPs in higher education offer the opportunity to share ideas, plan programming, and assess outcomes, which increases knowledge and awareness between campus partners (Jackson, Hansen, and Fowler 2005). IS&T was interested in learning more about how they could support and advance the OER efforts occurring across campus. The associate vice president for IS&T reached out to the dean of university libraries to bring individuals together to discuss OER initiatives on campus. At the discussion table were representatives from Distance Education, the learning management system, instructional designers, and other IT professionals. Each department was working toward similar goals individually. It was recognized that by bringing us all together and combining our interest and knowledge in OER as well as our individual expertise, we could achieve more toward building awareness for OER on campus.

Working off the results of the survey, brainstorming sessions identified specific initiatives or workshops to be conducted throughout the year to increase awareness. Through an established CoP with IS&T and Distance Education, we were able to plan and prioritize programming surrounding OER. It was determined that the author would be the primary presenter at a variety of presentations and programs, informally coined the “OER Awareness Roadshow.” Individuals from each department would help fa-

cilitate and support the presentations and programs. The roadshow included presenting informative sessions about OER at an annual campus technology conference, speaking at both in-person and virtual “Lunch n’ Learn” workshops, holding small, hands-on workshops through the established campus technology training calendar, and holding one large library workshop during a break in the academic calendar.

The survey identified a second priority of reducing barriers to adoption of OER. The data from the study regarding barriers to adopting OER compare evenly to national data. Previous studies have identified the top barriers to using OER as difficulty finding appropriate OER, lack of resources in specific subject areas, and the assumption that resources were not high quality (Belikov and Bodily 2016; Seaman and Seaman 2017). In the present study, faculty selected the most frequently cited barriers in adopting and using OER as difficulty finding what they need, lack of resources for their discipline, and time needed to find open resources. With the greatest number of faculty selecting either that it was too difficult to find appropriate resources or that there was a lack of resources in their discipline or subject area, the CoP looked for alternatives to reduce this barrier. An initiative was already under way through the Office of Distance Education for faculty to receive stipends to author e-textbooks for their classes. Textbooks authored under this initiative must be made available within the institution, but the author makes the decision regarding open licensing and access outside of the institution. Combining efforts in our initiatives will serve to improve awareness, adoption, and creation of OER on campus.

Subject librarians have an important role to play in helping faculty identify quality OER and affordable course materials in their discipline. Currently there are several OER repositories such as the Open Textbook Library, OpenStax, and Open SUNY, all of which contain numerous textbooks and other OER materials in a wide variety of disciplines and subject areas. Like many libraries, we have authored a Springshare LibGuide for “one-stop shopping” in the hopes it will make locating OER materials easier. The liaison librarians also work closely with interested faculty to help locate specific resources. However, this is still a time-consuming and overwhelming task.

Early in fall 2019, the library held a demo of EBSCO’s Faculty Select product and invited the CoP members, including representatives from IS&T and Distance Education and an instructional designer. Faculty Select is a mediated repository of OER content and e-books that are free of digital rights management (DRM). DRM places limitations on use and accessibility of e-books such as the number of pages that can be printed, the length of use, and e-reader requirements. Without these restrictions, users are able to access and use resources more easily. A survey was disseminated after the demo to gather feedback and identify the usability of the prod-

uct. All attendees agreed that Faculty Select would be a beneficial tool for our faculty and would reduce the major barriers to OER that our faculty were identifying. The library provided IS&T links to OER resources to determine accessibility, such as embedding and opening links in the learning management system as well as operability with software and hardware that supports accommodations for disabilities. Working together as a CoP, we have moved forward with a subscription to Faculty Select in the hopes of reducing barriers to OER and increasing adoption of OER.

Campus partners must be responsive to barriers and find ways to not just reduce them, but also improve sustainability of OER on campus. By establishing CoP on campus and shifting the responsibility from one librarian to a comprehensive campus team, these efforts can be significantly improved (Katz 2019). Time-intensive barriers can yield long-term gains and benefits, including increased student success and reduced educational costs (Colvard, Watson, and Park 2018). However, improving ease of finding and accessing OER may serve to increase OER awareness and use at a quicker rate. Utilizing the knowledge and expertise of IT professionals skilled in the campus learning management system and with instructional design can also vastly improve faculty's response to some of the most cited barriers. Working collaboratively with and having the support of professionals responsible for the online learning management system improve faculty understanding for how to locate and utilize OER in different teaching and learning modalities.

LIMITATIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND NEXT STEPS

Measuring and evaluating the current costs of textbooks on campus is a monumental task. Textbook prices differ drastically depending on the course, program, type, or text used. The majority of faculty (69 percent) selected the cost of textbooks for their courses to be \$100 or less. However, 51 percent of faculty responded that cost was important in selecting course materials, while 40 percent felt it was moderately important. Yet nearly 23 percent of faculty selected having textbooks that cost between \$101 and \$200. These data identify an important area to focus on in order to represent a complete picture of the financial barriers to students regarding textbook costs. Conducting a comprehensive review of textbook costs across all university disciplines would provide an important picture of course needs versus financial burden and help identify important disciplines to target for OER.

One survey question that had surprising results and implications for future initiatives was measuring the awareness of the library course reserves. Only 18 percent of faculty responded that they utilize course reserves and put materials on reserve for their students. The vast majority responded that they either did not use course reserves (53 percent) or were not aware

it was an option (29 percent). While many of the other survey responses are driving decisions for the CoP, this response will drive initiatives for the library specifically. Course reserves provide an excellent and affordable opportunity to reduce student barriers to textbooks and provide course materials at no cost. It is not as ideal as every student having a copy of affordable or free course materials, but when alternatives are not available, this is an opportunity for faculty to contribute to the campus OER landscape and aid student success.

One major limitation to the progress of the partnership was a restructuring of IS&T approximately nine months after the start of the collaboration. Responsibilities and positions were reassigned, and priorities were aligned with the university's strategic plan. While one of the objectives of the strategic plan focuses on the development of OER, the restructuring reset the collaborative efforts of the CoP and stalled our work for a short time. Rebuilding momentum is a challenge but not insurmountable. Continuing to strengthen campus partnerships and establishing a formal campus team will continue to be a primary priority.

Next steps for the campus CoP partnerships include expanding the awareness "roadshow" through new opportunities and presenting numerous workshops to promote and teach Faculty Select. With the level of awareness identified and a baseline measure established, an assessment plan is a significant priority. While growth in awareness will be an important assessment piece, more significant will be assessing adoption of OER in specific campus programs and departments. Financial savings will need to be measured and assessed as well. Creating a repository of data and information regarding OER initiatives and adoption is essential to demonstrate savings, which will lead to increased awareness and adoption.

CONCLUSION

Being able to obtain a baseline measure and a broad picture of local awareness and adoption practices for OER opened the door to build a collaborative partnership on our campus. The results of the faculty OER survey provided a much-needed snapshot of our faculty's knowledge, awareness, and use of OER. This knowledge, in turn, led campus leaders to bring together a group of individuals to work collectively as a CoP toward a larger OER initiative. Building on our collaborative partnership, the library, Distance Education, and IS&T could all work together to provide a stronger campaign for OER awareness on our campus.

Developing these collaborative relationships and forming CoPs takes some work. Identifying similar initiatives and mutually beneficial ideologies is an important first step. Persistence is also a key requirement for establishing a CoP and especially for retaining momentum. Overcoming obstacles such as personnel changes, shifting priorities, and even global

crises can, at times, feel discouraging. Like any important initiative, keeping the focus on the goal and at the forefront of the work is imperative to success.

As affordable learning and OER initiatives increase in popularity and as institutions adopt OA models, campus partners must leverage the benefits of collaborating to achieve success in the awareness, promotion, and adoption of OER. Creating a CoP with campus partners who have a vested interest in OER and student success can improve the success of awareness and adoption on campus. It is not, however, just about finding and using a specific OER resource. Open education is about adopting a new belief system and practice. Faculty do not need to just adopt a resource; they need to feel empowered by the decision and the belief to do so. The practice of OER needs to be implemented and become a part of the pedagogy, learning and instructional design, and assessment strategies in higher education institutions (Nascimbeni and Burgos 2016). It is important to establish a benchmark of awareness and attitudes regarding OER and then seek to develop collaborative campus partner relationships or a CoP, such as with IT, to increase the speed of awareness and adoption of OER as well as to improve the accessibility, usability, and ability to revise OER.

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