A Community-Based Collaborative of OER programs: A Case Study of University Initiatives Tied Together by Open Oregon Educational Resources

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Abstract

At the grassroots of open educational resources (OER) are students. For many faculty and OER leaders, our introduction to OER is a desire to save students money on textbooks in an effort to help them get through college with less debt. In Oregon, grassroots efforts and inter-institutional collaboration are supported by the state through Open Oregon Educational Resources. While programs are often conceived of at the institutional level, they grow because of centralized support. This article discusses five different academic initiatives that were all inspired individually, yet collaborate and grow together through statewide coordination.

The University of Oregon is investing in OER adoption in strategically targeted courses, providing faculty and departmental incentives for long term OER adoption, partnering with major institutional initiatives, and leveraging consortial memberships and support provided through Open Oregon Educational Resources to ensure alignment with best practices and statewide initiatives.
Western Oregon University leveraged stipends provided by Open Oregon Educational Resources to create engagement on campus and to advocate for OER funding with the University Budget Advisory Committee.

Oregon Institute of Technology set aside a portion of the library budget to give mini-grants to faculty supporting open resources in upper division science and technology classes. The program is self-propagating both in terms of marketing and in new converts to the open movement. Southern Oregon University conducted a “course material affordability” survey of students, which led to highly constructive conversations with faculty about students’ use of required course materials in the classes they teach. The “Course Design Academy,” an effort to improve learning outcomes in gateway courses with high DWIF rates, included adoption of OERs as part of the course redesign.

Treasure Valley Community College joined with the Oregon Community College Library Association to launch a grassroots OER initiative. Utilizing Open Oregon Educational Resources funds for textbook review workshops and grant stipends to get adoptions and expand the project, the college established a growing program that includes student outreach, library provision of OER materials, research assistance, professional development opportunities, and instructional design support.

Each of these programs represents an individualized approach tailored to very different campus environments, yet the overlaps in practice and statewide coordination enable us to tell a bigger story about student savings in Oregon since 2015.

**Keywords:** community-based, OER programs, case study, Open Oregon Educational Resources

**Introduction**

Open educational resources (OER) and textbook affordability are growing concerns across the higher education community. Textbook affordability is often a starting place for OER support. The case studies described here are examples of programs that started under this concern. While they may have started as individual projects or grassroots efforts at the university and college level, they grow and are supported through Open Oregon Educational Resources.

In 2015, Open Oregon Educational Resources came onto the OER and textbook affordability scene. Originally created by the Oregon Community College Distance Learning Association and funded by the higher education commission’s Community College and Workforce Development program. This was a result of two years of planning and advocacy by the 17 Oregon community colleges. In 2015, Oregon House Bill (HB) 2871 established an OER grant program through the state higher education coordinating commission. The earliest blog post on the site, “OER Regional Conferences: Registration Open,” was published on February 16, 2015 (Open Oregon, 2015). In 2017, the two state funding sources were officially brought together into Open Oregon Educational Resources.
Open Oregon Educational Resources is the tie that brings the initiatives described herein together. Later House Bills 2729 in 2017 and 2213 and 2214 in 2019 continue the funding and backing from the State of Oregon. These legislative actions not only provided a framework and resources to ensure compliance with student-focused educational initiatives, but also inspired and catalyzed efforts at public institutions throughout the State of Oregon.

Through the coordinating efforts of Open Oregon Educational Resources, two-year and four-year colleges scattered throughout the state came together regularly to share ideas, combine efforts, and support and inspire each other to help more students afford college and achieve their educational and career goals. This paper examines five such institutions and their individual efforts, along with connection through state funding and Open Oregon Educational Resources.

The University of Oregon leverages educational programs offered through Open Oregon Educational Resources and strategically extends faculty grant programs to high-enrollment upper division courses. Southern Oregon University supported Open Oregon Educational Resources OER grant winners with additional funding and course redesign support through the “Curriculum Design Academy.” With support from the Open Oregon Educational Resources “Textbook Sprint,” 11 courses at Western Oregon University were transformed to more open pedagogical practices. Oregon Institute of Technology based an internally funded support program on the Open Oregon Educational Resources applications with an upper division spin. Earlier on, though, Treasure Valley Community College was able to significantly grow its OER adoption and use rates through textbook reviews and state-level stipends.

**Literature Review**

Although the work described here began in 2015, OER was not a new concept. As early as 2001, the William James & Flora Hewlett Foundation funded OER initiatives. In 2019, the foundation has given more than $2.5 million toward OER initiatives as of the writing of this article (Grants, 2019). Non-profit entities, such as Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) and Open Oregon Educational Resources, have given financial support, as have individual institutions. There is still a known disparity in student text costs that such initiatives attempt to alleviate (Florida Virtual Campus 2019). However, with textbook costs continuing to rise and publishers of academic texts changing models from rights of first purchase to short-term licensing, the barriers in access to education not only continue to exist, but widen (McKenzie, 2019). UNESCO (2012) acknowledged that OER and open pedagogy increase access to education and empower students in the learning process. International support and state and community activities lend more weight to new projects.

Open Education has the continued ability to impact higher education. Addressing access and affordability for students is just one area of impact. Open educational practices in the classroom can improve student success and student retention rates (Clovard, Watson, & Park, 2017). Open practices, from open pedagogy to more finely designed courses, are making waves in student learning (DeRosa & Jhangiani, 2018). Engaging students in their own learning
environment has been a focus of academia for decades, through elements of instructional design and course quality review. Utilization of OER in courses does more than make materials affordable. It also provides instructors with a platform to customize content specific to their course and style of teaching and provides students with the opportunity to learn in a less overwhelming environment that is more about content and less about information absorption (Lashley, Wesolek, & Langley, 2018). Further, open pedagogical practices are designed to increase application and engagement in the material, while creating understanding in students about their role in scholarly communication and academic publication practices (Bliss & Smith, 2017). All of these elements make participation in open education a necessity for academic institutions.

Recently, publishing and library vendors have attempted to step into the OER field with less than open products. These attempts to colonize OER initiatives are often referred to as openwashing and diminish the impact that grassroots efforts can have. Openwashing as a term is derived from the idea of greenwashing. An openwashed item has the appearance of being open sourced or openly licensed, while continuing to involve proprietary practices (https://openwashing.org). A recent event in the U.S. Pacific Northwest asked participants what open meant to them. Many respondents wrote, “free” or “nothing.” Another common theme was on access (Duell, 2019). The wide variety of responses and lack of knowledge could stymie efforts, but in many cases, they offer an opportunity to grow and spread the word more (Wang & Towey, 2017). Librarians and libraries have many opportunities (and challenges) to support and develop OER (Smith & Lee, 2016). In the case of Open Oregon Educational Resources, many, if not most, advisory committee members are librarians from universities or colleges represented on the steering committee.

Academic libraries have proven to be important partners and leaders in the field. Already purveyors of social justice in their conduction of access to information and academic resources, libraries are key sources of outreach for creating and/or furthering OER initiatives (Smith & Lee, 2016). Their interdisciplinary role on campuses makes them natural partners for faculty and students. Libraries are also innate spaces for collaboration (Dewey, 2017). Open educational efforts, while largely on the backs of faculty to complete, are successfully and sustainably created when partnerships are formed across campus departments to also include areas such as libraries, instructional technology, instructional design, bookstores, student government bodies, and the administration. This type of strategic collaboration is not necessarily simple or intuitive on individual campuses. The need for overarching aid in creating these connections is important to the future of open education movements institutionally and beyond.

The programs discussed below represent individualized approaches tailored to very different campus environments, yet the overlaps in practice and statewide coordination enable us to tell a bigger story about partnerships and impact in OER.
In Fall 2019, the University of Oregon (UO) launched a “moonshot” challenge to faculty to save students $500,000 through the adoption of OERs and library resources. To achieve this goal, UO Libraries are leading a multi-level strategy to address high textbook costs.

At the institutional level, the library partner with institutional initiatives, such as Student Success, Summer Institute, and Core Education, not only efficiently provides resources and support for faculty, but also encourages the adoption of OERs at the point of course proposal and redesign and raises awareness of the link between first-day access to OER and student success.

Partnering with the bookstore, the library encourages faculty and departmental schedulers to report all course materials adoptions to the bookstore for ordering, including no-cost and low-cost course materials and OERs. Course materials reporting has risen 10% since the UO Duck store has rewritten textbook adoption platform software, revised workflows, and increased outreach efforts to support Oregon House Bill 2871, which requires designation of courses with no-cost and low-cost materials.

At the department level, we support departmental textbook adoption committees for courses with frequent offerings, high enrollment, and high-textbook prices and invite both faculty and their departments to work with a team comprised of librarians, discipline experts, and instructional designers to adopt OERs and receive additional faculty stipends. Departments who commit to OERs in textbook adoption processes receive additional stipends.

The library also leverages faculty relationships established through the Provost’s Teaching Academy – a community of practice of 200 faculty members. Dedicated to teaching excellence that is inclusive, engaged, and research-led, Teaching Academy members recognize that OER not only alleviates high text costs, but also supports inclusivity by removing financial barriers to course materials, allowing students to engage in course and content from day 1, and is authored by leading professors and scholars in the field. When we launched the “moonshot” challenge during Spring 2019 finals week to the Teaching Academy, faculty calculated how much they could save students by redesigning a course and unprompted, began pledging their support to the challenge.

To support interested faculty in the Teaching Academy and at large, we leverage our Open Oregon Educational Resources membership with the Open Textbook Network (OTN) to incentive faculty to submit OER reviews that could lead to more OER adoptions and offer grant programs for adoption, adaptation, and authoring. A total of 30% of the incoming class enrolls in Business Administration (BA 101), the first requirement for the business major. Open Oregon Educational Resources supported the development of OER for this course, which has the potential to save over 1,000 students $75, or $87,000 in total annually. Open Oregon Educational Resources also invested in College Composition III (WR 123). While fewer students enroll in this course than College Composition I (WR 121), the conversion of the existing casebook format to a free and open format could serve as a low-cost, low-barrier publication method for OERs across a range of disciplines in future grant cycles. Building on Open Oregon Educational Resources' successful implementation of OERs in Business Administration, the library is working with the Provost’s Teaching Academy and departmental textbook adoption committees to continue this success and support the adoption of OERs at UO.
Resources’ grant programs, UO Libraries will offer extended funding opportunities to upper-division and graduate courses with frequent offerings, high enrollment, and high textbook prices beginning in fiscal year 2020.

Through these coordinated efforts, the University of Oregon aims to increase institutional awareness, support, and grassroots adoption of library and OERs. The support of the State of Oregon, Open Oregon Educational Resources, and sister institutions throughout the state are core to the success at a local level.

Southern Oregon University

In 2014, using special funding from the Oregon State Legislature, Southern Oregon University (SOU) created a “Student Success Initiative” grant. Applicants were required to show how their proposed initiative helped deal with “obstacles to their progress from enrollment, progression, and graduation.” Applicants were also required to demonstrate that their proposal was not duplicative of existing efforts on campus, established measurable metrics to assess impact, and provided detailed financials. The proposal developed by SOU’s Hannon Library called for $10,000 to be allocated to faculty in Biology, Economics, Math, Physics, and Sociology to facilitate the adoption of OpenStax textbooks in those programs. While Hannon Library’s Student Success Initiative was approved, no faculty applied for funding. Part of the problem was that faculty members need time to evaluate and adopt OERs more than they need money. In addition, the grant was too prescriptive – identifying both specific programs and specific course materials.

As a result, the $10,000 was reallocated as matching funds for the 2016 Open Oregon Educational Resources OER grant. SOU was awarded two Open Oregon Educational Resources grants – one for Math 243-244 (Statistics) and one for Math 111-112 (Precalculus). SOU faculty members were also successful in the 2018 Open Oregon Educational Resources OER grant, receiving awards for Biology 101-103 (an intro sequence for non-majors) and CCJ 230 (American Criminal Justice System). Key to faculty engagement with the math grants was that, while the possibility of using OpenStax was included, consideration of other OER materials was to be part of the process. Importantly, this included not just other math textbooks, but also online homework platforms like WebWork.

In 2015, SOU’s Center for Instructional Support created the Course Design Academy, a research-based project to improve student success in gateway courses with high DWIF courses. Funded by the Provost’s Office, participating faculty were given $5,000 stipends to engage in “a student success initiative, a faculty development opportunity, and an investment in intentional design for key courses with the potential to substantially enhance student success” (SOU Course Design Academy, 2018). The first cohort of classes included FL 101-102 (Beginning Foreign Language), Math 243, Psychology 201-202 (General Psychology), and USEM 101-103 (a first-year writing and orientation sequence). The second cohort of classes included Biology 101-103, Biology 211 (Principles of Biology), CCJ 230, Communication 290 (Intro to Film Analysis), and
GSWS 313 (Fat Studies). The third cohort, supported in part by a grant from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, included a record 10 courses.

The first year of the CDA was a top-to-bottom course redesign and required participants to assess the ability of OERs to replace commercial textbooks. The second year was a bit less demanding of participating faculty and Center for Instructional Support staff, but still included OER assessment. By the third year, OER assessment (and top-to-bottom course redesign) had been abandoned. Although this was a disappointing result for OER adoption, the CDA had discovered that smaller interventions in courses with high DFWI rates could positively impact student success, without an enormous investment of time and other resources. In terms of interleaving multiple sources of support for OER adoption, it is worth emphasizing that three of the four Open Oregon Educational Resources grantees also participated in the Course Design Academy. The Center for Instructional Support remains a strong advocate and supporter of OER adoption on campus.

Perhaps the most novel of SOU’s efforts to promote OER adoption was a survey conducted at the end of the Winter 2018 term. In an attempt to get course-level data on the impact of course material affordability, students were given a survey for each class they were enrolled in and asked to complete each survey. The desire for course-level, or at least program-level, data stemmed from a belief that there is too much variation across programs to have fruitful discussions with faculty about course material affordability using national-, state-, or even institution-level data. In addition, the short survey was intentionally framed in terms of the “use of required course materials” instead of course material affordability or OERs. In part this was because most students don’t know what OERs are, and in part it was because it is easier to engage faculty in a conversation about pedagogy than about course material affordability.

From an undergraduate headcount of 5,036, and an average enrollment rate of three courses per term, the survey generated almost 2000 responses – a response rate of about 33%. Using skip logic, the survey had the following questions:

1. Did you use the materials required for course X? If “yes” then...
2. What required materials did you acquire for course X?
3. How did you acquire the materials required for course X?

OR

1. Did you use the materials required for course X? If “no” then...
2. Why didn’t you use the materials required for course X?

While there were not enough responses to generate valid course-level data, there were enough responses to generate useful program-level data. The results were shared in one-on-one meetings between program chairs and the University Librarian. Framing the questions in terms of course material use facilitated broader discussion of the relationship among required course
materials, the use or non-use of course materials by students, and pedagogy. Faculty want their students to use the materials they assign and are therefore very interested in why students might not use them. What do the reasons that students report for not purchasing textbooks imply for course design and pedagogy? Do students see a course as structured so much around required course materials that buying them is unnecessary? Can faculty convey to students that course materials may be vital for the success of some students but largely supplemental for others? Can courses be redesigned around course materials that are relevant to and affordable for all students? Answers to these questions vary greatly across programs, courses, instructors, and students, and the survey greatly contributed to faculty seeking answers. Though not directly connected to Open Oregon Educational Resources, SOU would not have conducted the survey if not for the groundwork laid by the Open Oregon Educational Resources OER grants.

Western Oregon University

Before the 2018-19 school year, OER activities on the Western Oregon University (WOU) campus were mostly confined to individual faculty locating or creating materials on their own. Several faculty members had taken the initiative to apply for earlier statewide grants to produce open textbooks – and were successful – but there was no collective action on campus around the use of OER.

During the 2018-2019 academic year, however, things began to change. Due to Open Oregon Educational Resources’ faculty stipends, WOU saw an increasing number of faculty members engage with OER. The Open Oregon Educational Resources Director traveled to the Monmouth campus to deliver an Open Textbook Library (OTL) presentation on two separate occasions. Thirty-five faculty members attended each of the presentations, 23 completed reviews of open textbooks in OTL, and 16 planned to adopt the textbook.

Open Oregon Educational Resources also launched a new initiative during Open Ed Week 2019 – the Textbook Sprint. Faculty were given a week (and a $750 stipend) to redesign a course using OER. Eleven of the 13 WOU faculty members who started the sprint completed it in its entirety. One faculty member completed the required OER online training and received $250, but she was unable to finish the redesign. The other instructor reported he was experimenting with not using a textbook at all.

Courses redesigned during the Textbook Sprint varied considerably. Three are described below.

1. Math faculty members at WOU were divided over the possibilities that OER can engender, and skepticism had inhibited OER adoption efforts until Open Oregon Educational Resources introduced the Textbook Sprint. When one faculty member described the initiative at a department meeting, she was given the go-ahead to redesign Calculus I (MTH 251) using the corresponding OpenStax Textbook. The savings for students in 2019-2020, because of that change, is estimated to be over $16,000.
2. A writing instructor redesigned Workplace and Technical Writing (WR 300). The course makes extensive use of the open textbook, *Technical Writing*, and the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL). There is a detailed syllabus with a week-by-week list of readings and activities, several assignment prompts with grading rubrics, and a final assignment (also with a grading rubric). The final assignment allows students to choose between two non-disposable projects, both of which can easily be adapted for students at different institutions. The Writing faculty member estimates students will save $17,000 annually by moving away from a traditionally published textbook.

3. A chemistry professor who obtained an earlier Open Oregon Educational Resources grant chose to redesign CHEM 450: Biochemistry I during the Textbook Sprint. CHEM 450 students will save $3980 during the 2019-2020 academic year, but this redesign has the potential to reach many more students than just those at WOU. University of California, Davis is creating an American Chemical Society-certified B.S. degree in Chemistry using only OER textbooks and other free materials, and the CHEM 450 textbook will be used in that degree pathway.

The eleven courses redesigned during the Open Textbook Sprint will save WOU students more than $110,000 during the next academic year.

Armed with this knowledge, the Scholarly Communication Librarian submitted a budget proposal to the University Budget Advisory Council in 2019. The proposal linked OER to the University’s Strategic Plan and met the University President’s three institutional budgetary priorities:
● growing enrollment (i.e., attracting new students);
● improving retention (i.e., keeping the students we already have); and
● making WOU the most affordable public university in Oregon

Because of its tie-in to the University’s priorities, the original proposal (which was combined with a related idea submitted by a library colleague) was funded for the 2019-2020 school year. The proposals also received additional funding (at a reduced level) for subsequent years.

In June, WOU attended an Achieving the Dream (ADT) No-Cost/Low-Cost Pathways Workshop fully paid for and supported by Open Oregon Educational Resources. Teams from a number of Oregon community colleges and universities spent the day doing hands-on work around OER action planning for the coming academic year. The WOU team included the Director of Disability Services, the Bookstore Manager, the Faculty Senate President, the Scholarly Communications Librarian, and several faculty members committed to OER efforts on campus. After identifying campus characteristics and creating a mission statement, the team set goals for the 2019-2020 school year, which include the following:

- Formalize an OER group on campus
- Gather baseline data regarding OER adoption on campus
- Increase awareness of OER on campus
- Provide guidance when awarding and tracking OER grants

The 2019-2020 school year on the WOU campus looks very promising for OER. The number of faculty who submitted proposals in response to OpenOregon Educational Resources’ most recent round of grant funding increased exponentially over past years, top administrators and faculty alike have expressed interest in creating a zero textbook pathway through the university’s newly redesigned Gen Ed curriculum, and the university has demonstrated a financial commitment to OER for this year and years to come.

**Oregon Institute of Technology**

Inspired by the activities of Open Oregon Educational Resources, a talk by Jennifer Snoek-Brown and Candice Watkins at ACRL-OR, 2017, and some of the grassroots efforts already underway at Oregon Institute of Technology (Oregon Tech), the library took on an initiative to support internally created OER.

In September 2017 at the annual Oregon Tech convocation, Dr. John Borgen and Dr. Gregg Waterman presented about OER. Dr. Waterman had been using texts he had created in math for years. Dr. Borgen was using an open text in psychology after another member of his department received an adaption grant from Open Oregon Educational Resources. Later that fall, Dawn Lowe-Wincentsen met with Amy Hofer with some ideas on getting OER into upper division sciences and engineering. In addition, a committee was formed by the library made up of a librarian, a representative from the College Commission on Teaching (CCT), and a number of teaching faculty who self-identified as already using OERs.

The initiative that came from this was an internally funded OER and a low- or no-cost material replacement mini-grant program. A total of $10,000 was set aside in the libraries budget to support faculty in the adoption, adaption, or creation of open, low-, or no-cost materials for classes. An emphasis was put on higher division Oregon Tech specific classes.

The first year of the program took on an informational campaign, engaging the community twice each term, with applications for the mini-grants due toward the beginning of Spring term. The applications were heavily based on the application that Open Oregon Educational Resources uses in the state-level grants. The committee looked at drafts of the applications before they were published. The program had support from the office of academic excellence and the provost. It was featured as an opportunity in a variety of publications to faculty. In 2018, there were 14 applications from 12 faculty members. The committee met and found a way to support all the applicants, if not all the applications. Faculty members who did not receive the full amount applied for were encouraged to seek additional funding through Open Oregon Educational Resources and CCT. In the local initiative award letter, each awardee agreed to present their activities with OER to the university committee.

Year two began by working with CCT and cultivating committee membership from people who received money in year one. The majority of people from year one presented during
an OER day in February 2019. While the day was snowed out, there were up to 15 attendees at a time via online and remote locations. All presentations were eventually put online and were shared in time for the year two round of applications. The rest of the year one participants presented in pairs. One pair presented the same week as the applications were due, and the final pair presented just after the awards were announced. The timing of the presentations helped others connect the actions of their peers to the initiatives supporting OER. All attendees of the presentations, respondents to surveys, applicants, and others who expressed interest become part of a growing list to make direct contact with. In addition to the internal program, the library received a collection of print OERs in use by Oregon Tech faculty through the Open Oregon Educational Resources OER Petting Zoo. These materials were placed on display in both campus libraries and were highlighted in university publications.

The first year of the program netted student savings more than $220,000, with every term saving an average of 335 students more than $200 each. An additional $160,000 has been saved by students since 2015 from a single Open Oregon Educational Resources grant received by Alishia Huntoon in the Psychology department. We are unable to count student savings from non-reported OER use, but we know that there are more out there in use. Despite 2019 applicant numbers and awards being lower than the first year, this number will still increase in the 2019-2020 academic year.

Based on low application numbers and other feedback from the university community, an educational program will begin in the 2019-2020 academic year. A course on OER for faculty is in development, and future cohorts will have to take this as part of their award. Funding to continue the initiative is being sought in a variety of ways from donors to grants – including grants through Open Oregon Educational Resources. While this initiative is largely independent to Oregon Tech, and somewhat organically grown among the faculty, it would not have started without the support and programs of Open Oregon Educational Resources and the statewide coordination offered.

**Treasure Valley Community College**

In the early 2010s, the Oregon Community College Library Association began working to develop individual initiatives on each of their 17 campuses. Treasure Valley Community College is a small, rural institution in an economically challenged region that hosts many first-generation students, as well as immigrant and migrant students. Making information pathways that bridge accessibility and affordability gaps for its students is the passion of the college library. Starting an Open Educational Resources initiative was a natural focus for investing in. The library director, Christina Trunnell, began teaching with OER texts in 2013. Utilizing lessons learned and shared knowledge among the colleges, Trunnell began outreach to individual and department faculty groups. With a few regional trainings and workshops, Treasure Valley Community College was able to get some faculty interest in the idea.
In 2015, with the creation of Open Oregon Educational Resources and its grant incentive funds, the library director and Amy Hofer hosted an OTN textbook review workshop and later an all-day OER Sprint that incorporated OER with backward design concepts. Treasure Valley, like many other institutions, had little institutional knowledge, support, or access to innovation funds for this work. Trunnell led more unfunded textbook review workshops and outreach efforts in the following year. By the end of 2016, the number of faculty utilizing OER had gone from one to 15. For this community college, the economic impact was significant.

With the passage of legislation and the growth of the program, more areas of the institution became involved. Treasure Valley faculty members were able to participate in discipline-specific grants across institutions, professional development opportunities, and workshops. Despite the drive and commitment by faculty to see education become more accessible and to develop new dynamic teaching practices, the institution had few resources to support the program. Faculty had to seek outside sources to keep the program growing. Partnering with faculty at other institutions through Open Oregon Educational Resources grants, participating in statewide initiatives like the Open Ed week round of events, and trialing new ways to incorporate library services into making OER more accessible, the program has proved sustainable and continuously viable for growth.

Treasure Valley’s OER program continues to develop new materials for courses that are not currently available in the broader open community. It also has developed a new type of instructional design course for adopters/adapters of OER that faculty inside and outside of the institution take prior to implementation. These unique efforts and continued work have proved possible only through support from the Open Oregon Educational Resources community, external funding sources such as Open Oregon Educational Resources, and the commitment by individual faculty. The library’s role in supporting faculty and student educational outreach is vital to the success of open education at the institution. In the spirit of the movement, connections and partnerships across departments, campuses, and entities remain at the heart of this program.

Discussion

The open education community is a broad, global entity built on sharing, making connections, and collaborations. Yet, institutions do not start new programs or initiatives on a broad scale, but rather on a small scale, specific to their capabilities and needs. Academic institutions that embrace open education initiatives also have their own set of challenges. These can be seen in various campus cultures, access to funding, and broader awareness of the initiative. The less obvious challenges, such as access to instructional support services or administrative support, can equally hinder garnering momentum for OER. Open Oregon Educational Resources not only helps to fill these gaps unique to each institution, it provides the necessary sustenance to sustain all campus initiatives.
At its inception, Open Oregon Educational Resources, and more specifically Amy Hofer, offered education and support in the form of textbook review workshops through the OTN, individual campus support and guidance, and a statewide space for sharing. The program now includes a variety of grant opportunities for faculty, grants for institutions in course marking work (HB2871), and individual campus events. Additionally, it is a resource for publication practices, educational opportunities and support for faculty, best practices for OER, and broader research in elements of open education. It supports individual faculty, individual campuses, the state’s higher education community, and open education internationally.

The breadth of its reach is due wholly to Amy Hofer’s approach to this work and the supporting network that she has built. This is demonstrated in the collaborative spirit that all Open Oregon Educational Resources work is done. Hofer established a statewide OER steering committee. This is made up of volunteers from post-secondary institutions. Its members fill all types of roles on their campuses, giving the committee a complete perspective when addressing issues. This committee meets regularly to provide support and guidance to current and new directions under the leadership of Hofer. Initiatives within the Open Oregon Educational Resources program are all formed into specific committees that are volunteer as well. Members of these committees are largely made of from the steering committee or the OCCDLA membership but are always open to the broader Oregon academic community. These committee charges range from state conference or event planning, such as Open Ed Week 2019, to publishing whitepapers. This work format creates a collaborative and supportive space for open educational practices statewide. It is a key and important element of the work that Open Oregon Educational Resources provides.

The collective program that is Open Oregon Educational Resources creates a framework for sustainability. Left to themselves, initiatives on individual campuses can become stagnant or defunct. With turnover, environmental changes, or other institutional dynamics, OER initiatives fall into the realm of any other project. While student needs are increasingly significant in this area, individual institutions’ abilities to meet these needs vary. Having an overarching program at the state level ensures consistency in growth and support that institutions cannot commit to. It holds all of higher education in the state together. It provides a platform for growth and change inside and outside of campuses. It provides opportunities for individual engagement external to campus commitments. Open Oregon Educational Resources is the essential element to the success of the programs mentioned here, as well as their future sustainability.

Conclusions

In 2019, the Oregon Legislature once again provided funding for sustained OER and open pedagogy at both two year and four-year colleges throughout the state through HB2214. The programs and support from Open Oregon Educational Resources impact the larger academic community in the state exponentially each year. And yet no matter what the funding model is,
the initiatives would not get off the ground without the internal creation and support at each institution. These initiatives often tie into the libraries of those institutions as well.

Represented here are only five instances. Collaborative efforts grow not just in Oregon, but across the higher education community. The Open Oregon Educational Resources connective tissue between community colleges, state universities, and the state legislature is a unique structure supporting programs in the state. Whether reported here, reported through Open Oregon Educational Resources, or not reported at all, this movement continues to grow and reach more students, easing their path to graduation.

References


**Acknowledgement**

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actively engages with UO faculty, administrators, staff, and the broader professional and higher education community to explore, develop, deploy, and support new applications of technology for teaching, learning, and research.

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Christina is the statewide OER coordinator for Montana higher education. Previously, she was the director of the Treasure Valley Community College library, serving as the campus lead for OER. She served as a member of the Oregon Community College Library Association and Oregon Community College Distance Learning Association, which started the Open Oregon Educational Resources program. She also served on Open Oregon Educational Resources’ statewide steering committee and other Open Oregon Educational Resources committees, working to keep the movement and inspiration behind the movement to open education alive.

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