

# Strategic Plan – Initiative Work Plan FY2014

Initiative Name Open Education Resources: Saving Students Money on Textbook Costs (Pilot) Date: March 23, 2013  
Goal # 5 Initiative # 3

Goal Chair(s) Jay Gatrell and Greg Goode Initiative Chair(s) Heather Rayl

**Thesis Statement** A select number of Indiana State University's faculty will be recruited to pilot free open source textbooks in their classrooms for Summer 2013, Fall 2013, and Spring 2014. Free textbooks will reduce ISU students' financial burden. Using open source textbooks will also enable all students in the class to obtain a copy of the assigned text leading to an increased retention and graduation rates.

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## **1. Introduction/Background – What?**

Student textbook costs have risen over the course of the past 20 years. In 2009, a study done by Student Public Research Interest Group found wholesale college textbook prices had risen more than four times the rate of inflation between the years of 1990-2009.<sup>1</sup> According to the College Board Advocacy and Policy Center, a student will expect to pay \$1200 for books and school supplies during the 2012-2013 school year.<sup>2</sup> Indiana State University estimates that students will spend \$1170 in books in supplies during the 2012-2013 school year.<sup>3</sup>

Another emerging trend is the increase in sales of eBooks and eTextbooks, which are gaining a foothold in the traditional print marketplace. As students become more comfortable reading texts in digital format, the demand for eTexts will increase. eTextbooks have some advantages over print texts: they are more portable, have increased searching capability, and some even offer enhanced content like video and audio. However, eTextbooks as they are currently being produced are not addressing the issue of textbook cost. The student cannot recoup the cost of purchasing an eTextbook by reselling it, oftentimes the student only purchases access to the text for a semester, if the student is only purchasing temporary access to the book it not accessible offline, and sometimes the student is restricted to a specific device in order to access the book.

On the other end of the education materials spectrum, open education resources (OER), including open source textbooks, are teaching materials free for educators to use, adapt, and reuse in their classroom. Many OERs are licensed with Creative Commons, a copyright system that allows the creator to retain their copyright status, but also allows others to copy, distribute, edit, remix, and build upon their work. OERs can include lesson plans, worksheets, syllabi, and even full textbooks. While the OER movement started to gain traction in the late 1990s and early 2000, it has exploded in popularity in the past two years.

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<sup>1</sup>New Laws, Free Books and Textbook Rentals Could Help Curb Rising Costs This Fall. Student PIRGs. Press Release August 26, 2012. <http://www.studentpirgs.org/news/new-laws-free-books-and-textbook-rentals-could-help-curb-rising-costs-fall> Accessed 2013-02-01

<sup>2</sup>Average Estimated Undergraduate Budgets, 2012-2013. College Board Advocacy and Policy Center. <http://trends.collegeboard.org/college-pricing/figures-tables/average-estimated-undergraduate-budgets-2012-13>. Accessed 2013-02-01

<sup>3</sup>Undergraduate Tuition and Fees Fall 2012-Spring 2013. Indiana State University. <http://www.indstate.edu/tuition/estimate.htm>. Accessed 2013-02-01.

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OER eTextbooks specifically address all of the issues that arise with publisher-produced eTextbooks: the text is available for free, the text is usually available in a variety of formats so that it can be viewed on multiple platforms, and the text is available for offline use. Students can even choose to print the entire OER textbook if they so choose, or only print portions of the textbook.

The availability of open source education resources has grown in the past two years. Projects like Rice University's OpenStax College and Connexions provide access to free or very low-cost educational content available under Creative Commons Attribution license. These textbooks have been written, edited and reviewed by academics across the nation. Therefore, the barrier of entry for using open source texts has substantially lowered for those instructors who seek a complete text to use in their classroom. Students often give the "excuse" of cost of the text as a reason for not purchasing a textbook. If the textbook were free or low cost, then the student's reasoning behind not acquiring the text is no longer valid.

With the cooperation of the initiative team, we will recruit faculty to convert their classes to use open source texts. In Summer 2013, we will have 1 class use OER, and in Fall 2013, we will have 5 classes use OER. The instructors will apply to participate in the pilot and receive a \$3000 stipend to adapt their classes to the new text. In Spring 2014, we continue the practice of offering a stipend to individual faculty to convert their classes. But we also will recruit one multi-section Foundational Studies course to convert all sections of the course to using OERs. The department recruited will receive \$12,000 in extra travel funds.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the textbooks, the initiative team will develop several questionnaires that will be used to evaluate the students' thoughts and concerns about the chosen textbook throughout the semester, as well as a periodic evaluation of the faculty member's thoughts and perceptions about using the text.

Additionally, the library will develop a website to act as a clearinghouse for open source education materials for faculty who want to learn more about the movement.

Throughout the 2013 academic year, the library will also host at six workshops on open source educational materials in order to educate the faculty about using them in the classroom. These workshops will include panel presentations from pilot faculty, demonstrations of available resources, and student testimony.

### **2. Proposal/Purpose/Justification – Why?**

The cost of a college education has grown 66% for public four year institutions in the past 10 years.<sup>4</sup> Indiana State University estimates that students will spend \$800-\$1200 on textbooks alone, which is approximately 8% of their total cost of attendance. Even if one class the student has enrolled in

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<sup>4</sup> Average Published Tuition and Fees by College Board. <http://trends.collegeboard.org/college-pricing/figures-tables/tuition-and-fees-region-over-time>

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switches to free open source textbooks, that could save him or her \$100-300, depending on the cost of the traditional print textbook.

We propose a project to test the effectiveness of using open source textbooks in Indiana State University foundational studies classrooms. Focusing the pilot effort on foundational studies courses has two purposes:

1. Large entry-level courses target the greatest number of students who are asked to purchase an expensive text that they may not use for the remainder of their academic career, depending on major. An open source textbook in these courses would eliminate the textbook cost for the students.
2. Many open source textbooks are already targeting basic “100-level” university courses; more material is available to choose from.
3. Students are more likely to drop out of college early in their academic year. Free textbooks would eliminate a significant barrier to their success, as they would be able to read the required text at no cost to them, therefore improving their grades, and positively affecting retention and graduation rates.

### **3. Discussion of Past Years Results – Benchmark Successes?**

This project is a pilot and had not been run before. We will use the results of this pilot as a base to measure success in future years.

### **4. Work Plan, Next Fiscal Year – Action Steps – Process – How?**

#### **The Classroom Pilot**

1. Initiative Chair will form an initiative team who will recruit the initial 6 faculty to participate in the pilot for Summer 2013 and Fall 2013. Each faculty member who wants to participate will fill out an initial proposal that will detail what students will save through their conversion.
2. Initiative team will develop work plan participating faculty will use to record the use of OER in their classroom. Faculty will record positives, negatives, and other data.
3. Initiative team will develop short questionnaire to distribute to students evaluating student perception of the materials.
4. During Fall 2013, initiative team will recruit additional faculty to convert classes for Spring 2014. Also, they will recruit one multi-section class to commit to use OER for all sections in Spring 2014.
5. A final report of the results of the pilot will be due in Summer 2014.

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## The Resource Website

1. Gather Resources. Due June 1.
2. Construct Site. Due July 1.
3. Review site. August 1.
4. Goal: Site ready in Fall 2013 semester for demonstration and use by participating faculty.

## Workshops

Six workshops will be conducted over the course of the 2013 academic years. They will be open to both students and faculty.

1. Workshop one: Introduction to open education resources. The pilot is introduced, the website is premiered. Estimated time: mid-September 2013.
2. Four brown bag panel discussions (two each semester) with participating faculty and students. They will discuss perceptions and experiences with the materials so far.
3. Spring 2013 – report on Fall pilot

## 5. Reporting and Deliverable Schedule – When?

Deliverables:

- Website – due August 1, 2013
- Classes converted to OER (at least 6 by end of Fall 2013)
- Workshops held – six total over 2013 academic year

Reporting:

Initiative team will report on outcomes at end of summer 2013, end of fall 2013, and end of spring 2014.

## 6. Budget – How Much, a General Discussion of Funds Use?

This initial pilot (FY13) should cost a total of \$25,000. The five faculty participants will each receive a \$3,000 stipend. Additionally, the faculty who develops the website will receive a one-time \$6,000 stipend. There is an additional \$4000 allocated for travel to nearby institutions and/or conferences.

FY14's projected budget is for \$30,000: \$3000 for 6 faculty to convert their courses, and \$12,000 in departmental travel funds for the conversion of a large multi-section course in a department.

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## **7. Stakeholders and Management Plan – Who?**

### **Stakeholders:**

Students – saving money on textbooks so school is more affordable, enabling students to obtain required texts. Having texts will increase grades, and thus increase retention and graduation rates.

Administrators – answers mandate by State of Indiana to make higher education more affordable for students.

Faculty – adopting free or low cost open source texts helps students' academic achievement.

### **Management Plan:**

Library – develop website

Initiative team – develop metrics to test success of OER in classrooms, recruit faculty participants, plan and execute workshops, report on success of program

## **8. Outcome Assessment & Future Testing**

- Collect 991 numbers of students in participating classrooms to track retention and graduation rates.
- Establish 4-6 workshops on OER to encourage use.
- Lay groundwork for recruiting more faculty to convert classes to OER in Spring 2014, and recruit one large multi-section course to OER in Spring 2014.

## **9. Line Item Budget Discussion that tracks Budget Templates ...**

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