

Strategic Plan – Initiative Work Plan FY2016

Initiative Name Creating More Affordable Education: Open Educational Resources (Pilot)

Date May 29, 2015

Goal # 5 Initiative # 3

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Thesis Statement Indiana State University's faculty are being recruited to convert their traditional text-book dependent classes to using free open educational resources (OERs). Free textbooks and other learning materials will reduce ISU students' financial burden. Using open source learning materials will also enable all students in the class to obtain a copy of the assigned text leading to an increased retention and graduation rates.

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 1990-2009.¹ 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.² Indiana State University estimates that students will spend \$800-\$1200 in books and supplies during the 2015-2016 school year.³

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, and 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.

¹ 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

² 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

³ Undergraduate Tuition and Fees Fall 2014-Spring 2015. Indiana State University. <http://www.indstate.edu/tuition/fall2014-2015-undergraduate/index.htm>. Accessed 2014-05-19.

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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.

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.

In FY14, this initiative's ongoing pilot project began testing the effectiveness of using OERs in the classroom. Initial results indicate that in most circumstances, both students and faculty benefit from using OERs. Students benefit by saving money and having access to materials at the beginning of the semester. Faculty benefit by constructing custom content for their classes that specifically address their learning outcomes for the course.

2. Proposal/Purpose/Justification – Why?

The Report of the Textbooks and Supplies Subcommittee of the Affordability Taskforce was released in early 2012.⁴ Using public domain or open access materials was amongst the cost saving avenues explored in the Report. While the subcommittee did not create guidelines for piloting such a project, this initiative was created to address it.

The Report identified that some faculty on campus were already using and creating OERs in their classroom successfully, but that in many cases it, "added to their own workflow."⁵ A steering committee was formed to support a pilot program that encourages faculty to use OERs in the classroom. To incentivize faculty to take the time to find OER materials to replace the traditional textbook, \$3000 is offered to any faculty member that elects to participate in the program.

In order to track students' perceptions of the materials, the steering committee created a survey to distribute to the students enrolled in the participating faculty's class twice a semester – once at the beginning of the term and once at the end of the term. Each survey gauges the students' opinions on textbooks in general, digital readings in general, and their thoughts on the use of the specific classroom materials used during the term.

⁴ Report of the Textbooks and Supplies Subcommittee of the Affordability Taskforce.

<http://www.indstate.edu/affordability/documents/affordabilitybooksfinalreport.pdf>. Accessed 2014.05.19.

⁵ Ibid., 11.

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The steering committee also initially restricted enrollment in the pilot program to faculty teaching undergraduate courses that were either approved for Foundational Studies requirements or were required courses for a student's major. The committee felt that this population of undergraduates would benefit the most from reducing the cost of textbooks; simultaneously having the greatest impact on overall cost savings, based on these larger class's enrollment numbers.

3. Discussion of Past Years Results – Benchmark Successes?

- Implemented self-study course for faculty – Teaching with OERs – based on experience from Fall 2013 pilot period.

This four module 10-week course was designed in conjunction with ISU's Instructional Design Team. Since Fall 2014, we have enrolled 22 faculty. Six faculty have completed the course, and three are more than half way through. Most of the faculty currently enrolled are working on courses scheduled to be taught in Fall 2015 and Spring 2016.

- Recruitment time frames

We have concentrated formal recruitment times each semester before textbook orders are due to the bookstore. This allows faculty to indicate to the bookstore that they will not be ordering textbooks for the next semester.

- Converted 36 classes to OER from inception of the project

Semester	Number of new classes (repeats not included)
F13	5
Sp14	6
Su14	4
F14	9
Sp15	8
Su15	4
TOTAL:	36

General Numbers

Total Students Participating	1,834
Textbook Affordability Impact	\$187K
Average Savings Per Student	\$102.08
Average Anticipated Textbook Cost per Student	\$123.74
Faculty Participants	23

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Number of classes using OER	36 Unique 48 counting courses that have been repeated in more than one semester
Multi-section OER adoptions	2
Ave. Response Rate for Student Surveys	Pre-Survey: 62% Post-Survey: 71%

Savings by Semester

Fall 2013	\$39,108.76
Spring 2014	\$34,036.54
Fall 2014	\$26,318.76
Spring 2015	\$71,014.14

- We have paid out \$102,000 in individual stipends and \$20,000 in departmental payments totaling an expenditure of \$122,000.
- Affordability savings for students vs. stipend investments: \$65, 214, or 53.45%
- 36 of the OER classes have only been taught one time. As the program continues, students who take the classes in the future will also continue to save money, thus increasing the ratio of savings to university investments.
- Previous year's Benchmarks Table

Initiative Benchmarks	FY 2014A	FY 2014G	FY 2015A	FY 2015G	Fall 2016	Fall 2017
Number of students taking at least one course that uses only OER (zero or minimal class materials fee)	672	800	1834*	1000	1200	1400
Number of unique courses using OER **	17	5	36	20	30	40
Total Amount saved by students on textbook costs***	\$84K	\$100K	\$187K*	\$125K	\$150K	\$175K

*This number is not yet final. An adjustment for summer courses will be made when the semester is over to finalize the number.

** This benchmark used to count only faculty, but we have found that some faculty are interested in converting more than one of their courses.

***This value is measured cumulatively over the entire length of the project.

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

Faculty interested in participating in the program will need to complete the “Teaching with OERs” course that leads them through the steps of choosing and evaluating appropriate materials, aligning them with their courses learning objectives, copyright and fair use concerns, and effectively organizing the resources in the LMS (Blackboard). By completing the prerequisite course, participating faculty will have constructed a complete class curriculum using OERs, ready to be used with students during the next semester.

1. Recruit new faculty for Spring & Summer 2016 during early Fall 2015. Host workshops, and develop print/electronic flyer for distribution to all faculty.
2. For each semester, work with faculty who are already participating to distribute surveys and troubleshoot any issues as they occur.
3. Assess students that attended OER classes in AY 2013-14 for retention.
4. Evaluate content of self-led OER course in early Fall 2015.

Recurring tasks:

- Recruitment is effectively ongoing, but will be concentrated in the time periods before October 15 and March 15 (due dates for textbooks orders for the bookstore) for each semester.
- Each student in participating courses receives a pre-survey and a post-survey during the course of the semester.
- Faculty are asked to informally evaluate their experience at the end of the semester.

5. Reporting and Deliverable Schedule – When?

August 4, 2015 – Survey results and reporting numbers finalized for Summer 2015

Week of September 7, 2015 – collect names, emails and 991s of students in participating classes

August 13 – October 10, 2015 – recruit faculty for Spring/Summer 2016. This includes hosting two introductory workshops: most likely in September.

During Fall 2015 – distribute pre- and post- surveys to students (dates TBD)

December 4 - December 15, 2015 – Collect feedback from participating faculty

December 15, 2015 – January 13, 2016 – Survey results and reporting numbers finalized for Fall 2015

January 12 - March 10, 2016 – recruit faculty for Fall 2016 and beyond.

Week of February 1 – collect names, emails and 991s of students in participating classes

During Spring 2015 – distribute pre- and post- surveys to students (dates TBD)

April 29 – May 10, 2016 – collect feedback from faculty

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May 10 - May 31, 2016 – Survey results and reporting numbers finalized for Spring 2016

Summer Schedule is more staggered due to the nature of the classes.

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

The majority of the requested funds will be used to award stipends to faculty who successfully incorporate OERs into their courses. For each course that is converted, faculty receive a \$3000 stipend.

An additional \$10,000 has been budgeted for departments who choose to convert all sections of a large undergraduate Foundational Studies course.

\$1000 is budgeted to purchase permanent licenses to specific eBooks requested by participating faculty to support their course activities. The eBooks will be licensed and housed in the library's permanent digital collections.

\$500 is budgeted to provide light refreshments during the face to face recruitment workshops.

7. Stakeholders and Management Plan – Who?

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 – helps answer 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.

8. Outcome Assessment & Future Testing

- Monitor student responses to pre- and post- surveys. Address issues as they arise.
- Monitor faculty evaluations for satisfaction and areas to improve.
- Continue to revise self-led Blackboard course as needed.
- Collect 991 numbers of students in participating classrooms to track retention and graduation rates.

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

Labor Costs Faculty (Line 5 - \$75,000): every faculty member who agrees to convert a course to using OERs receives a \$3000 stipend. We already have 21 courses that have committed to use OERs for the Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 semesters. We predict we will have at least 4 more faculty convert in Spring 2016. The total requested amount for Labor Costs Faculty (Line 5) represents 25 course conversions.

Labor Costs Other (Line 6 - \$10,000): We do not currently have any large course conversions scheduled. We may be able to recruit one in the next academic year.

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Operational – Equipment (Line 20 - \$1000) - For some classes, additional materials are needed. The library can purchase multiple user licenses for certain eBooks at the request of faculty member to use in the course. The eBook becomes a part of ISU Library's permanent eBook collection, available for the course's use. Additionally, the eBooks is available for anyone else in the university.

Operational - Marketing (Line 40 - \$500): Providing light refreshments during the face to face recruitment meetings will provide additional incentive for interested faculty to attend as well as create a more comfortable atmosphere for those in attendance.