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Final Report

Open Textbook Network Summit and Conference
Greater Western Library Alliance (GWL) Annual Conference - OER: From Vision to Action

Over the summer, I attended two professional development conferences which will greatly enhance and impact my work at UHMC. The focus of each conference was the same: OER (“Open Educational Resources”) and Open Education. Although teachers and faculty have been sharing materials, techniques, and learning objects since teaching began, the modern concept of “open” has been slow to penetrate higher education and the everyday thought process of faculty.

These conferences were designed to enable OER leads to return to their campuses educated on some of the major platforms/statistics of the Open movement, fired up to bring this information to the campus, and to explore specific actions to engage the campus community in the conversation of open resources and open pedagogy.

Because *Open* is as much a movement as anything else, a key aspect to these conferences is building a network/community of practice for sharing ideas and knowledge. Knowledge sharing as well as narratives of success (and challenges) around OER programming dominated the programs of both conferences. The impact of these sessions on my work cannot be understated. Because every campus is different, it is impossible to replicate the successful implementations of OER programming at other schools. However, the talking points and methods of delivery will translate to our campus. For example, here are some of the concepts I learned and will be bringing to campus:

- The creation model for textbooks. What is the process publishers follow for producing textbooks? How does OER process differ? But more importantly, how is OER the same?
- The positive effects of OER reach across to all members of the campus: students, faculty, and administrators. It is crucial to emphasize different message points for different audiences.
- The importance of the role of students in educating the campus community. The impact of textbook costs can be deeply felt by students. They need a platform to educate the community about these issues. If we are worried about food insecurity or electricity pricing or housing ... what are we doing about things we can control (i.e. textbook costs for our students)?
- There is a growing body of evidence that OER directly translate to increased student success for all students but a higher rate for those with Pell Grants or other financial considerations.
- The importance of support and advocacy. This position can be lonely and maybe even controversial. It is imperative to find supporters and advocates on campus as well as support those willing to try OER or other Open options.
- One growing field in the Open Movement is Pedagogy. In this model, the instructor serves more as a conduit of learning than a “fountain of knowledge.” Students may create their own

textbooks or lab manuals or glossaries as part of their assessment. Instead of just absorbing an education, they are actually creating a body of knowledge for themselves and others to use.

- While at the conferences, I witnessed several colleagues from consortium come together to address challenges. It was a great model for UH because I do not think we work together as a system nearly as much as we should or could. Watching others solve problems as a group was inspiring.
- The majority of the Institute was training for textbook reviews. The Open Textbook Network trains OER leads to conduct workshops for faculty to experience and review open textbooks in the field. We experience the workshop as a faculty member would and then receive training on how to conduct them ourselves. The overall goal of the program is to make *Open* and *OER* the first option when they are looking for supplemental teaching materials.

Because one of the main purposes of these conferences was advocacy, I have returned back to Maui excited and ready to share the knowledge and experiences I gained this summer. I have several strategies to further OER promotion/support as well as share knowledge with the campus community:

- ⇒ I plan on conducting at least one workshop for reviewing textbooks in the fall semester.
- ⇒ I will be conducting informative workshops on OER for faculty, staff and students in different contexts throughout the coming year.
- ⇒ I will be setting up student videos and interviews, so they have a voice in the process. I plan on sharing these stories with the faculty at an academic senate meeting or other venue
- ⇒ Charged to continue with the Ambassador program and I intend to keep run another cohort this year.
- ⇒ I will bring the energy and hope of collaborating across the system to our systemwide OER meetings.
- ⇒ Empowered to educate campus community about textbook prices and creation process.
- ⇒ Continue ongoing call to arms for faculty and administrators to explore OER as an option for their student and teaching needs.
- ⇒ Continue to advocate and support OER adoption on campus through the Ambassador program as well as other adopters on campus. I intend to run another cohort his year.
- ⇒ Start investigating a grant or “stipend” for departments or faculty to create their own textbook that will replace multiple sections of textbooks and bring maximum student impact.

I truly appreciate the UH Foundation and the Faculty and Staff Development Fund Committee’s support for this activity. Switching to OER makes a direct impact to students and faculty: it emphasizes academic freedom allowing faculty to design the exact course they want, it supports students financially but also academically by giving them access to learning materials on day one of classes in a format of their choosing (phone, computer, print, etc...), and it contributes to higher rates of student success and retention.