Oct 21st, 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM

OER Programs at Private Liberal Arts Institutions

Janelle Wertzberger
Gettysburg College

Alecea Ritter Standlee
Gettysburg College

Hana Huskic
Gettysburg College

Description

The Statewide California Electronic Library Consortium's (SCELC) Scholarly Communications Committee invites you to spend lunchtime on Monday of Open Access Week (Oct. 21) learning about Open Education Resource (OER) Programs at private liberal arts institutions. Please join this year's panel of faculty, librarians, and students from Gettysburg College and the University of San Diego to learn about their experiences with OER.

Location

Room 18 (Library Lower Level)

Disciplines

Information Literacy | Library and Information Science | Scholarly Communication | Scholarly Publishing

Comments

Webinar recording is available on the SCELC website at https://scelc.org/events/scelc-open-access-week-2019-webinar-oer-programs-private-liberal-arts-institutions

OER Programs at Private Liberal Arts Institutions

SCELC Webinar - October 21, 2019

Janelle Wertzberger, Dr. Alecea Standlee, Hana Huskic '22

I'd like to thank Dr. Byrd and SCELC for inviting Gettysburg College to be part of this webinar. We love collaborating, but it's rare that we reach all the way across the continent to do so!

Library context

Janelle Wertzberger,
Assistant Dean and Director
of Scholarly Communications,
Musselman Library

A little bit of background on Gettysburg College and how we got into this work. We're a small, liberal arts college of about 2600 undergraduates located in Gettysburg, PA, about 80 miles north of Washington, DC. I've been at Gettysburg College since 1997 and worked in the Reference & Instruction department for many years. In 2012, we launched our open access institutional repository, and I led the team that worked on it. I first heard about OER at a conference in 2014 and started talking about it as soon as I returned to campus. Because of the success of the IR and the potential for OER, we formed a Scholarly Communications department in 2015. This is still a very new functional area of the library.
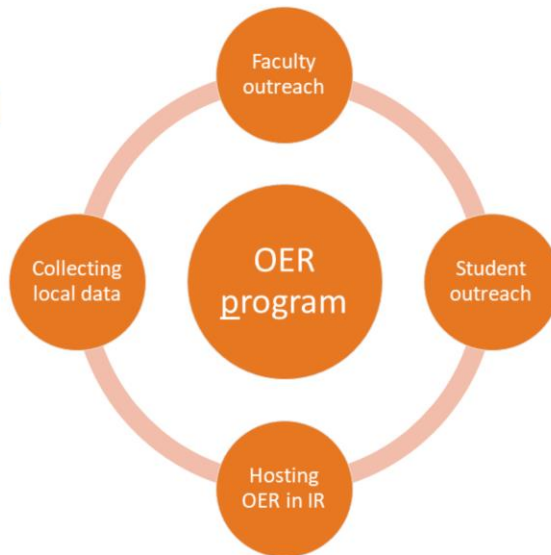
I characterize Gettysburg's OER program as "library-led." I sometimes hesitate to call it a capital-P Program because of its decentralized nature. We do not have a library advisory committee at Gettysburg, nor do librarians have faculty status. Perhaps many of you are in the same boat. On the plus side, we have a positive working relationship with our CTL, and we leverage the social capital built through our IL program and liaison program. We're trying a lot of different things at once:

- Faculty outreach and education
- Student outreach and education
- Hosting OER in our IR
- Collecting local data about OER use and textbook affordability issues
- In general, positioning OER in campus conversations about student success and barriers to access

Faculty programs

- Free Your Textbook: Quality Course Materials for Every Student
- What would happen if you ditched your textbook? Gettysburg faculty share strategies
- Customize Your Course Content with OER
- Open Textbooks: Access, Affordability, and Academic Success

Faculty engaged in a CC license sorting activity

OERs are awesome! JCCTL Workshop

That said … we've had a number of faculty-facing learning opportunities over the past 5 years – I've listed some program titles on this slide. I'll also note that our latest program, which was held in February 2019, utilizes the Open Textbook Network model, which pairs an informational presentation with the opportunity for faculty to write a review of an open textbook that fits with one of their courses and earn a small stipend ($200).

We like to promote faculty use of open textbooks and this is one example – these slides were part of an Instagram slideshow we released during Open Education Week in 2017. It was fun to talk a little more with these professors and to celebrate them in this way. This is one of the rare instances where the target audience is BOTH faculty and students.

On a more serious note, we also did a Textbook Listening Tour in fall 2018 (modelled after the one Steven Bell instituted at Temple University). The goal was to open up conversations about textbooks in general rather than to "sell" open textbooks, but sometimes we did explain and promote open textbooks.
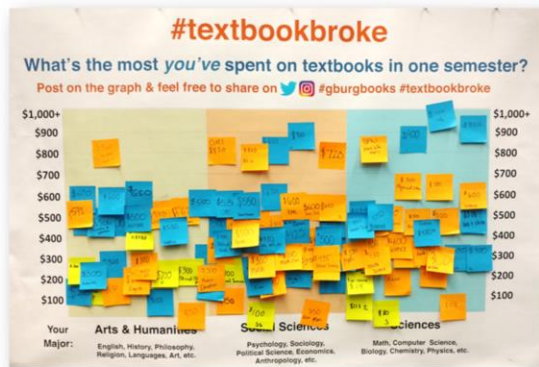
We started creating learning opportunities about textbook affordability specifically for students a couple of years ago. We've had a couple of interactive displays in the library lobby during OA week or OE Week – these draw a lot of attention and buzz.

In addition, one of my departmental colleagues has had the opportunity to be a guest speaker in classes in the Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies department. This provided a chance to connect the values of the open movement with the values of an academic discipline in a critical way – certainly more than one could achieve in a lobby display.

We also incorporate a brief learning opportunity about textbook costs and open textbooks into our orientation program for first year students.

Bottom line: we're experimenting with a lot of different ways to connect with students, and you'll hear more about that when Hana speaks in a few minutes.

We've been sending out lots of information about these issues, and so it's really gratifying to see information coming back at us from student journalists on campus - in our campus newspaper and its associated podcast, as well as campus blog on social justice. I'll include links to all those pieces on the last slide in case you want to read any of them. I'm especially excited about these because they have wide readership across campus, including upper level administrators. Student voices are extremely effective at articulating and amplifying these issues in a way that gets noticed.

What's next?

- New president
- Increased focus on a changing student population
- Collect and share local data
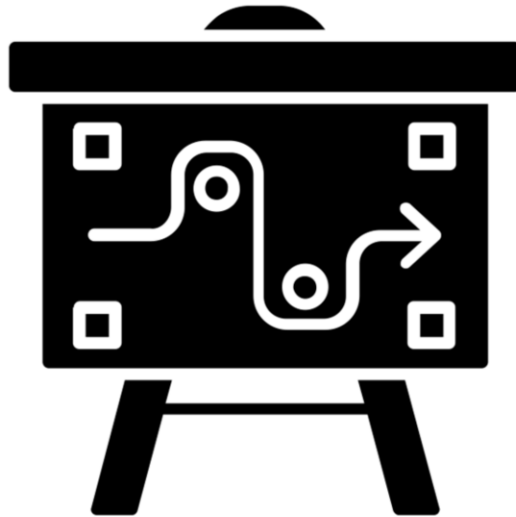
Created by Vectors Market from Noun Project

I'll finish with a quick word on what we're doing this semester.

- I met with our new college president, who had heard about textbook issues from a few sources and wanted to know more about open textbooks
- Lots of attention on our changing student population – we have a new campus working group on Barriers to Access for students, so we're continuing to communicate with them
- We just finished administering a textbook survey to students that we adapted from the Florida Virtual Library survey (with which many of you will be familiar). We're analyzing data now and preparing to share it widely in the spring semester.
- We're participating in the (still new) Affordable Learning Pennsylvania project, and thinking strategically about how to advance use of OER on our campus. We're thinking about how best to facilitate change in high enrollment courses (grants?), working with our liaison librarians so they can help "market" OER titles, and continuing to refine our message while recognizing that the demographics of our newest faculty colleagues are changing right along with those of new students.
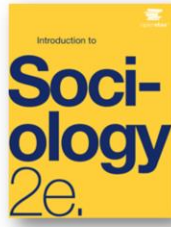
How the World Changed Social Media – used in SOC 250 Digital Culture & Online Behavior
Sociology 2e – used in SOC 103 Introduction to Sociology

Advantages for Faculty and Students

- Equity and low-income students
- Assign what you need, not the whole book
- No "waiting for my textbook to come"
- Improve performance, retention and engagement
- No more "forgotten books"
- Customize classes with diverse readings from many sources, beyond the textbook!
- Encourage life-long learning – no sell back on these books

Created by Adrien Coquet
from Noun Project

Addressing concerns: Faculty-to-Faculty

Created by Francisco Garcia Gallegos from Noun Project

- The quality of OER is similar to commercial textbooks in most fields
  - OpenStax and others are available for review for you to confirm quality
- OER is <u>not</u> the same thing as digital resources (no Wikipedia here!)
- Your students *will* likely have a device that can access the book
- Many OER have an option for a low cost paper copy for those who don't read online (including you if you prefer)
- Ancillary resources: While not available everywhere, some OER include such resources.

Student perspective

Hana Huskic,
Class of 2022 (current sophomore)

International student from Bosnia & Herzegovina

Major: Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies

Works as Scholarly Communications Student Assistant at Musselman Library

If you will take only one thing from my talk, I would hope it to be the idea that the textbook costs is a social justice issue. It is not about survival of the fittest, because the fittest is not really taking into consideration people's backgrounds and beliefs. Yet, it also is not about political beliefs nor economy or frankly, academia. It is about living young humans. It is about equity and the fact that these costs are mostly affecting the students that struggle financially. Unfortunately, looking at the intersections, those are often also students of color, international students and the first generation students.

The textbook costs and the lack of discourse on this topic, fail to promote the holistic ideas Gettysburg College promotes. That is why I came up with a list of student requests.

Student Requests

1. Promote a more engaging discourse on the topic
2. List the total cost of the course in advance
3. List all the textbooks for the course on the Bookstore website
4. Create better alternative resources for students who cannot afford their textbooks
   - Financial aid
   - System of circulation of used textbooks within the college
   - Setting the maximum price for the FYS

Created by cathy moser
from Noun Project

I am sure most of you could immediately respond to these request and claim that they are not attainable nor a priority or that the professors are not paid enough. I am aware of all those arguments too. However, I do not believe that I am an idealist for asking professors and people in power to act upon these problems. It is your job to educate your students to best of your abilities. Students should be students, and should not do the unpaid (emotional) labor that could affect them in many ways because of their background or culture. Shame exist, and the taboo about money is a real issue.

For example, I approached my Cinema and Media Studies professor about the cost of our textbook. I did it only after I almost failed my first exam because I did not have the book and I was too insecure to ask a classmate if I could borrow theirs. My professor listened and talked to me, and then found a solution to my problem. I then excelled in that course. Not every student would be in a situation to ask a professor to help them. That is why it is the professor's responsibility to offer the best and most equitable sources to all of their students.

1. The first solution is spreading more of this information among the staff and students. Many are not even aware of the OER.

2. Students pick classes for the whole year beginning with the fall semester and professors often use that as the reason for why there are no prices listed on the course. The sections within the course can vary significantly. If struggling students could see and compare those prices, they could pick the section they can afford. This would also push professors to reconsider the textbooks they are using.

3. Similarly, some professors try to help the students by sending emails with the lists of textbooks instead of posting them on the bookstore site. They recommend buying them over online platforms like Amazon. On the first look, this is a great idea, however it is not taking into consideration especially the first year students who do not own a credit card or cannot afford an Amazon Prime membership. (Some books take weeks to arrive if you order without the prime membership, and professors send the emails only a week or two prior to the beginning of the classes.) I personally did not have a US card until the late October and could not afford using my Bosnian card because of the value difference.

4. However, these solutions probably would not be necessary if
- The financial aid fully covered the textbook costs.
- Another alternative would be creating a better system of circulation of the used textbooks within the college. This is specifically where Gettysburg could use advice from other institutions.
- The last idea is to set the maximum price for the First Year Seminars or ideally all introductory courses because they usually cost the most. Syllabi should to be updated regularly. Students constantly talk about the books they did not get to use, books that they used for only a few readings or are just a general requirement course that they are not interested in.

We are damaging the world on so many fronts; people are discriminated by the system and people in power. Our chance is to act and be optimistic. The first step is to make our voices be heard. So, I am asking you, the professors and staff to act together with us students because you too have the power to continue this discourse among each other.
Yet, we may have talked enough. It is time to act. I hope these small steps now sound more reasonable.

Campus media coverage by student authors

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Thank you!

Our presentation is available in
The Cupola, Gettysburg College's open access
institution repository:

https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/oaweek/2019/
oaschedule2019/1/