Open Access Week at Gettysburg College

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

OER Programs at Private Liberal Arts Institutions

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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
This webinar will be screened in Room 18 on the lower level of Musselman Library. Individual registration is not required. Snacks will be provided. All are welcome!
I’d like to thank Dr. Byrd and SCELE 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!
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
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.
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.
Faculty perspective

Dr. Alecea Standlee, Assistant Professor of Sociology
Expertise: gender, social theory, sociology of technology, social inequality

OERs used:

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
Addressing concerns: Faculty-to-Faculty

- 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 **not** 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
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
Campus media coverage by student authors


Thank you!

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