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OER Initiatives and the Liberal Arts College

Abstract

Presentation slides for a webinar hosted by the Partnership for Liberal Arts Collaboration and Exploration (PLACE) and co-presented with Caitlin Carter (Franklin & Marshall College) and Ron Joslin (Macalester College). The presenters discussed their work in support of OER awareness, adoption, and creation at their institutions, each at a different stage in the process. After detailing the current situation at each campus, the presenters offer common obstacles faced in the liberal arts college context and practical advice for overcoming them.

Keywords

Open Educational Resources, Liberal arts college, OER, OA

Disciplines

Higher Education

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OER Initiatives and the Liberal Arts College

Case Studies from Franklin & Marshall College,
Gettysburg College, and Macalester College

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An Apparent Paradox

Liberal arts colleges are ideal environments for nurturing open scholarship given their emphasis on innovative pedagogy and individualized learning.

Yet, open educational resource (OER) initiatives within higher education have been most successful at community colleges and large research universities rather than liberal arts colleges.

Franklin & Marshall College



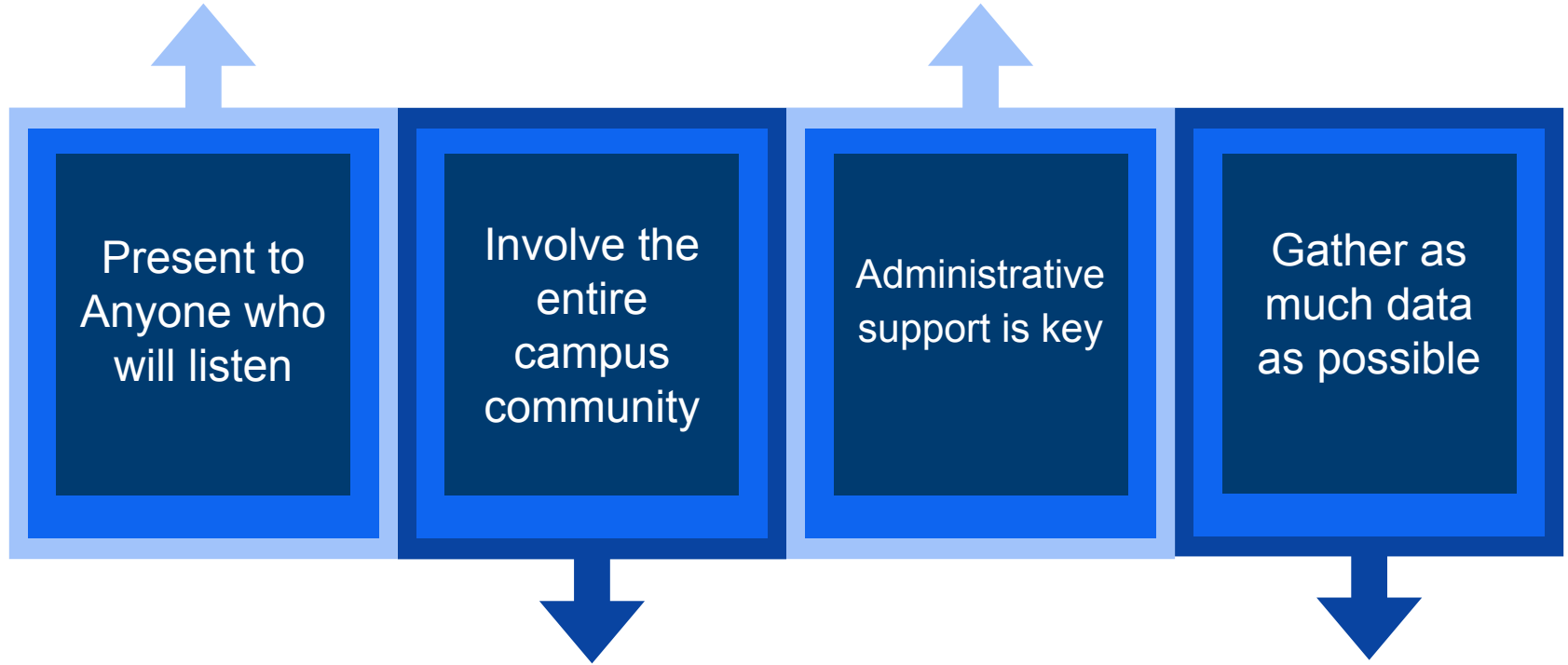
F&M College Library Strategic Plan

5. Grow Collaborative Outreach and Expand Advocacy Engage with our communities and increase advocacy in order to demonstrate our unique value to the College.

Goal: Support initiatives that reduce barriers to access to quality information

- Encourage and support the faculty adoption of Open Educational Resources and Open Textbooks as class texts
- Advocate for Open Access publishing and inform campus on scholarly communication issues

- Department Chairs, Provost Council
- Library Staff
- One-on-one conversations
- Precedent of Open Access support
- Provost spreading the message



- Open Access Week
- Open Education Week

- Top enrolled courses and costs
- Survey data

Musselman Library
Gettysburg College



The Cupola: Scholarship at Gettysburg College



- the college's open access institutional repository
- run by [Janelle Wertzberger](#) and launched in 2012
- hosted by bepress on their Digital Commons platform
- the start of the library's Scholarly Communications Department
- part of the college faculty's reporting workflow
- the basis for campus outreach regarding all things "open"
 - ["What would happen if you ditched your textbook? Gettysburg Faculty Share Strategies"](#)
 - ["Customize Your Course Content with Open Educational Resources"](#)

Expansion of ScholComm and OER outreach

- New position: Scholarly Communications Librarian
- New relationship with bookstore
 - Infographic on [Selecting Affordable Course Materials](#)
- New OER outreach to students during OA Week
 - [#TextbookBroke Wall](#), OpenStax display, [newspaper article](#) on Textbook Crisis, [podcast](#)
- New OER outreach to faculty during OE Week
 - Open Education @ Gettysburg College ([libguide](#)) and Send ScholComm Your Syllabus
- Proposal for Pilot Faculty OER Grant Program



Pilot Faculty OER Grant Program



- SPARC [Open Education Leadership Program](#) 2017-2018
- Nearby peer institutions also planning or piloting OER grants for faculty
- Tendency for faculty to apply for larger grants for larger projects (OER creation)
- Challenge for LAC librarians: more faculty support needed but fewer resources
- Partner with the [Johnson Center for Creative Teaching and Learning](#)
- Current grants co-run by JCCTL and Musselman Library
- Primary model will be Macalester College's OER Faculty Stipend Program

DeWitt Wallace
Library

Macalester College



The OER Program @ Macalester College

- ❑ **OPEN ACCESS CULTURE**

Long history of library support for OA initiatives; promotion of open access publishing; institutional repository; library as publisher

- ❑ **RAISING AWARENESS**

Began OER efforts in 2015 with an awareness campaign around open educational resources / open textbooks; met with key stakeholder groups; joined OTN; getting our message right

- ❑ **SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE**

Faculty hands-on workshop; received grant funding to help identify obstacles and put tools/resources in place; created stipend program

MATH 454-01

Bayesian Statistics

No adequate undergraduate-level textbook appropriate for this topic.
Professor hasn't used a textbook for the last two semesters – instead uses her personal notes and exercises.

- ❑ constructing using the RStudio "bookdown" platform and will be shared / published on GitHub (and library's IR).
- ❑ textbook licensed will be CC BY; fully customizable, and incorporate the required computer code for applying Bayesian methodology)

How is library involved?

- provided seed funding through stipend program
- not directly involved in textbook development

GERM 101 / GERM 102

Elementary German I & II

German language and culture curriculum which reflects today's world; incorporates multimedia and interactivity

- ❑ Pilot and seed funding through Mansergh-Stuessy pilot
- ❑ Project evolved since inception - involves faculty from 12 institutions
- ❑ Built in WordPress using H5P and multimedia files
- ❑ Curriculum will be modularized and licensed CC BY

How is the library involved?

- facilitated pilot project, seed money
- help organize content / assign metadata,
- co-authored NEH grant,
- student support for video / audio editing,
- focus group / usability testing,
- workshop training in Vienna (July 2018),
- coordinating style guide,
- facilitating content collection, storage and preservation

EDUC 250-01

Building Trust: Education in Global Perspective

Global education textbook which examines education in light of international development and conflict; ability of education to create social change especially in developing countries.

- ❑ open textbook led to re-design of course
- ❑ students helping to create content for open textbook
- ❑ creating 'live' case studies bringing the 'world into the classroom'
- ❑ turn theory into reality: apply classroom to real-world problems

How is the library involved?

- pilot project / help organize content
- embedded librarian - led seven sessions
- support for video / audio work
- facilitated zoom sessions w/ NGO
- three summer student employees

Challenges for OER implementation

Liberal Arts Librarians

- **ANOTHER HAT**

Liberal arts librarians often have many different job responsibilities; unable to focus just on OER initiative

- **VARYING LEVELS OF OA INFRASTRUCTURE**

While many liberal arts campuses have history of supporting OA, levels of support do vary greatly with some having little or no open access infrastructure

Liberal Arts Faculty

- **AWARENESS**

Most faculty are not aware of OERs or whether open textbooks are available for their discipline; no single easy-to-use source for discovering OER

- **TIME COMMITMENT / RESOURCES**

Can involve significant time commitment; customizing / authoring textbook huge task requiring support resources

- **SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES**

Many faculty are reluctant to switch due to lack of supplemental resources available with OER.

Practical Takeaways for OER Initiatives

- Look for communities of practice and professional development opportunities
- Technological support for faculty, as well as funding, is necessary
- No need to reinvent the wheel
- Present to anyone who will listen
- Baby steps: create mind share before market share
- Quantify everything

Selected resources for librarians

- [Rebus Community](#)

Facilitates collaborative efforts to promote and create open textbooks; offers email listserv/forum and monthly office hours webinar in collaboration with the OTN

- [SPARC](#)

The Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) works to promote open sharing of research and to promote use of open educational materials; provides great email listserv/forum

- [Creative Commons](#)

The Open Textbook Network, OpenStax OER Commons also provide a wide variety of OER resources.

Conferences: Open Education Conference, October 2018.