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## Central PA Region Open Textbook Workshop: The Gettysburg College Experience

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## Central PA Region Open Textbook Workshop: The Gettysburg College Experience

### Abstract

Speakers from local academic institutions discuss their open textbook initiatives, how they got started, what has worked, and what hasn't worked.

### Keywords

textbook affordability, open textbooks, OER initiative, Affordable Learning Pennsylvania

### Disciplines

Scholarly Communication

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Gettysburg  
COLLEGE

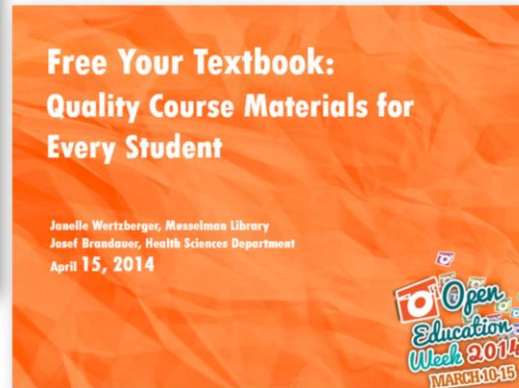
**Central PA Region Open Textbook Workshop**

Affordable Learning PA – March 11, 2020

Janelle Wertzberger, Musselman Library



How we got started...



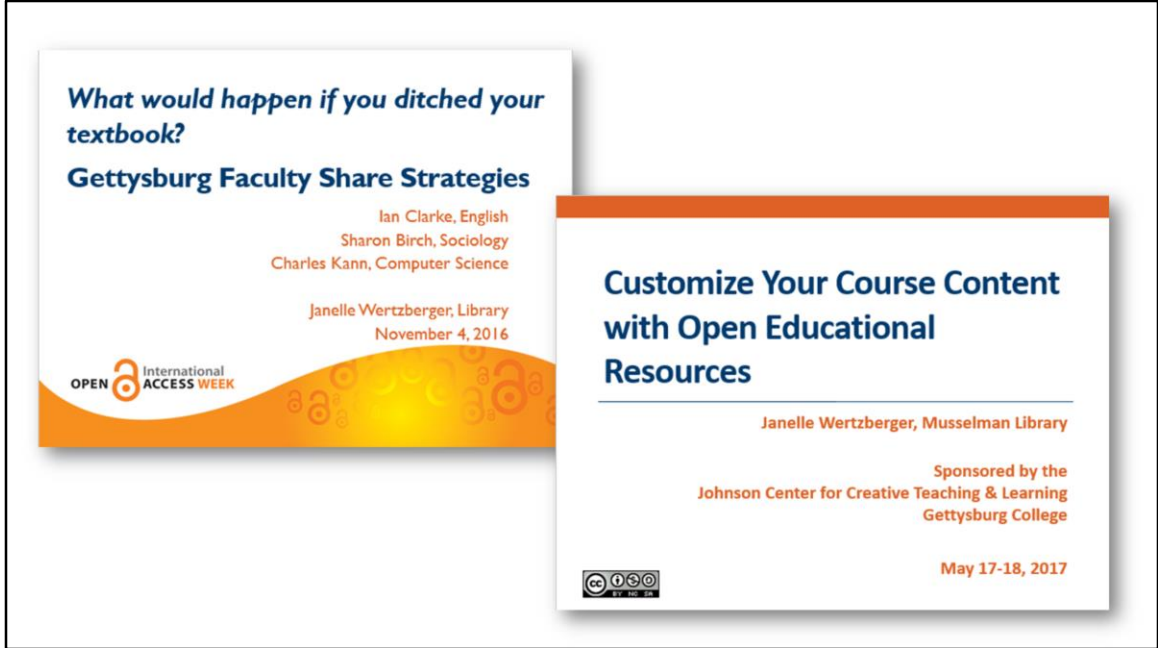
#### How we got started

- I attended a SPARC meeting in 2014 and first learned about OER and open education.
- I came back to campus and put together a presentation called “Free Your Textbook” just a few weeks later. This didn’t start a revolution or anything, but I wanted to mention it because I realized that we’ve been working on this for 6 years. Not at full speed that whole time... but there is an incubation period.

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What happened next?

What happened next?



We did a lot presentations and hoped people would come. Some faculty did come. Some of them even adopted OER... but not a ton. We had library-sponsored presentations for faculty, like this panel featuring professors who had shifted away from commercial textbooks. We also partnered with our Center for Teaching and Learning in pretty much every program format they offered – in their teaching-focused discussion series, for lunchtime presentations, and for a longer workshop in May when our campus devotes time to faculty development.

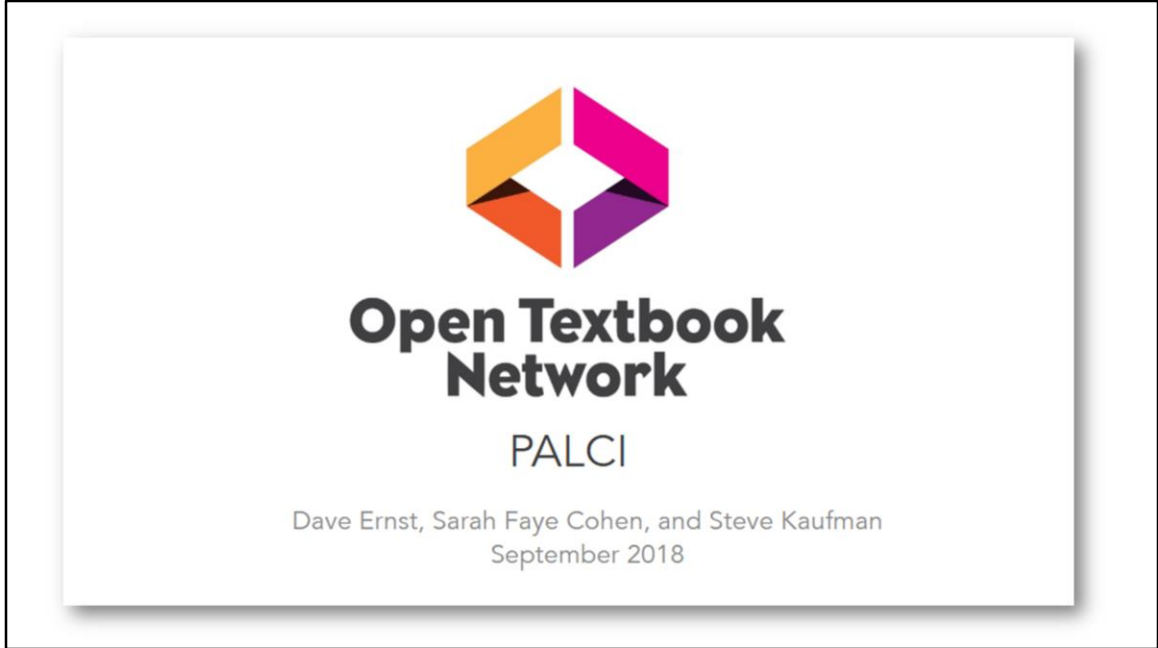
The presentations weren't completely unsuccessful, but they were mostly a "preaching to the choir" situation.

We also had meetings with the Provost and the academic deans – very structured meetings, with data from our financial aid office, our own campus climate survey, and the FL textbook survey. We were hoping for endorsement of our work and concrete action item, but disappointingly, those never came.

# Important influences

Better things have been happening since then, and as I reflected in preparation for today, I identified a couple of things that really influenced our programmatic approach. Both of them are related to ALPa!





The first is the Open Textbook Network workshop in September 2018. Attending this training convinced us to try their model (presentation + book review stipend). We recruited our CTL as a sponsor.

- Workshop in February 2019. 25 stipend-eligible attendees, 16 wrote reviews. [Funding sources: Johnson Center for Creative Teaching and Learning (\$1000), Friends of Musselman Library (\$2200)]
- The stipend opportunity caught some people's attention who weren't already in our orbit.
- We repeated this workshop again just last week, when we had 20 stipend-eligible attendees. We modified the presentation some, most notably including faculty guest speakers who attended last year's workshop and adopted OER as a result.

**Effective strategies for encouraging OER**  
From working with over 200+ colleges and universities on their OER initiatives

Nicole Finkbeiner, Director, Institutional Relations  
nicolef@rice.edu, @nfinkbeiner, @openstax

openstax RICE

The next is the Nicole Finkbeiner webinar for ALPa. I was out of town when this was broadcast but watched the recording later... then watched it again with my colleague. When a new colleague joined us in August, we made watching this part of her Week 1 onboarding activities. It's that helpful.

We adopted “the Finkbeiner approach,” which means we are thinking about the Zone of Adoption. The Zone is the time of the year in which faculty might be open to changing their required course materials (start of fall semester through Thanksgiving, and start of spring semester through early or mid-April). During the zone, we pump out a lot of messaging and different learning opportunities so that it seems like OER is everywhere and all the cool kids are doing it. We saturate the airways!

The Finkbeiner approach also suggests that your marketing plan should include 8 “direct tactics” each year within the “zone of adoption.”

- Direct tactics should result in faculty members saying “yes,” “no,” or “I’m interested, tell me more.” You should be able to track responses to your direct tactics, including OER adoptions and number of students impacted.
- Indirect tactics are more of an “if we build it, they might find it” thing. Informative libguides are indirect. Lists of courses that use OER are indirect. They are helpful, but they should not be your main focus.

What has worked? 3 things



What has worked? I have three things I want to highlight.

First, we got a new President. Admittedly, the OTN and Nicole Finkbeiner didn't get me a new president ... but they helped me crystalize my message so I could pitch it when I got the chance. I introduced myself and asked for 10 minutes to talk about textbook affordability and how it impacts our students. Fortunately, this wasn't the first he'd heard of the issue. He already had a "barriers to student success" report on his desk. He's heard about OER at new faculty orientation. Then a piece by one of our international students was published on our campus social justice blog. He was in listening mode, and he met with me for an HOUR. He said "we need to get you in front of the faculty." And he said textbook affordability was a concern of his in a Faculty Council meeting – they set the faculty meeting agenda, and they invited me to speak.

I got my shot in December -15 minutes on a faculty meeting agenda. I really prepped for it and had a LOT to share in 15 minutes. My slides (and script) are in our IR if you want to see them. I made my slide presentation into a Finkbeiner-style "direct action" by asking faculty to complete a very short google form – on their phones – at the end of the presentation – if they were interested at all. I promised that we would not follow up with them until January. I got 36 responses that day, more leads than I've ever had at once.

## Yes, we are all OER Advocates!

Librarian Liaison Meeting  
11-20-19



# 2

### ACTION –

Write and commit to  
completing one OER  
advocacy action directed  
at faculty that you can  
complete before  
Thanksgiving break.

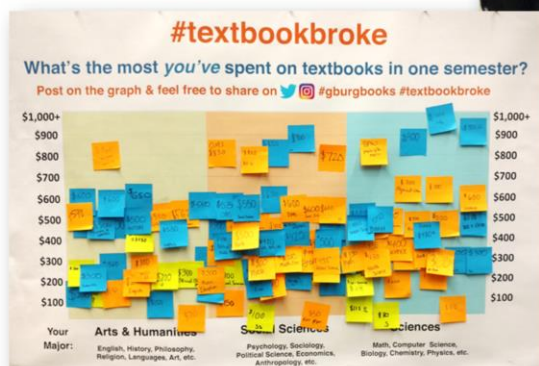


Created by Ben Davis  
from Noun Project

Next - We have stepped up training for our liaison librarians. We devoted our November 2019 liaison meeting to this topic (it was called “Yes, we are all OER advocates!”) to help liaisons feel updated in their knowledge and empowered to engage more actively with faculty in their departments. We had a “direct action” in that meeting, too.

It was a good thing we’d done this in November, because when I got those 36 faculty responses in December, I needed to ask for help replying to everyone. Most liaisons jumped at the chance.

# 3



Third, we've leaned in on student programming, which has taken a variety of forms. In the beginning I was a little ambivalent about the usefulness of this, as it is faculty who make decisions about course materials (not students), but some of my colleagues really wanted to do it and so we did. I'm now convinced that student feedback and activism is an important component of an OER initiative. Student voices are often heard in a way that librarian voices are not.

We've done #textbookbroke and graffiti walls...



“

- This is the beginning of my second year at Gettysburg.
- There are **23 (text)books** in these two boxes, some much larger than the others (the number would be bigger if I kept the rentals from the last year).
- The 23 stacks of paper (used, paper copies) cost around **\$1,300**.
- \$1,300 is 2,318 Bosnia-Herzegovina Convertible Marks, which is a **fourth of my mother's yearly salary**.

”

– Hana Huskic '22

We've engaged student journalists, who have written articles in our campus newspaper, conducted podcast interviews, and authored pieces for our social justice blog. This is an excerpt of a piece written for that blog by an international student who is greatly affected by the cost of textbooks.

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Other works by student journalists:

Doscher, Phoebe. 2019. "#textbookbroke: Students Discuss Textbook Prices." *The Gettysburgian*, March 6, 2019. <https://gettysburgian.com/2019/03/textbookbroke-students-discuss-textbook-prices/>.

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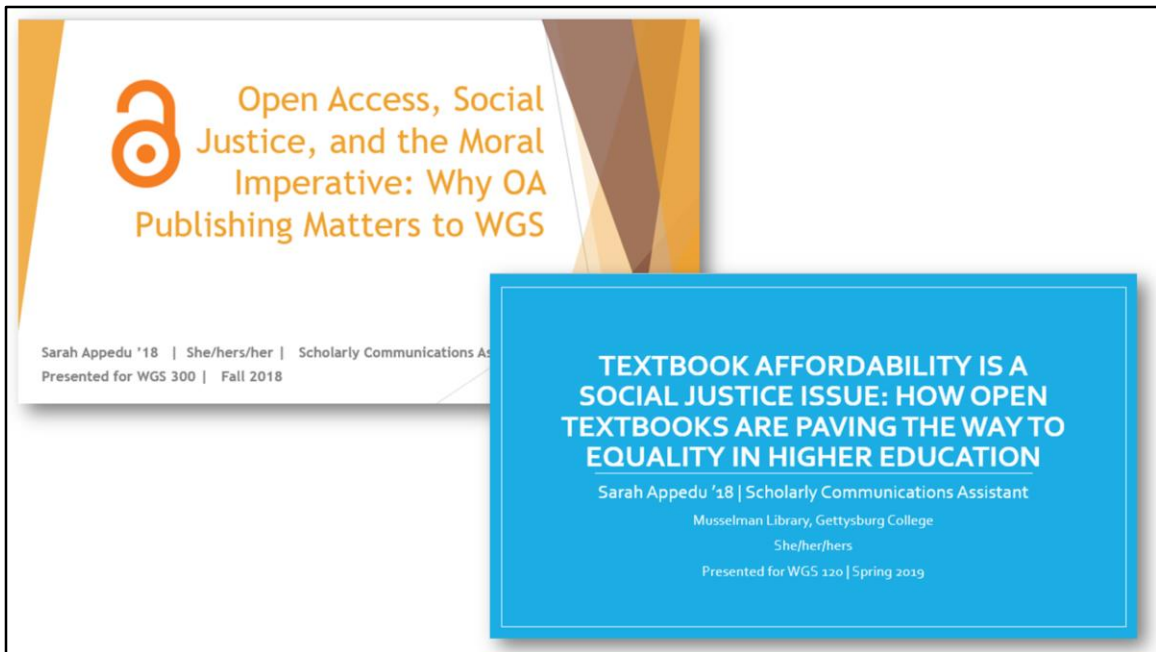
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We've had the opportunity to present to classes in the Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies department. One of these presentations convinced a professor to adopt an OER for her introductory course, and the other presentation was open to the entire campus and covered by the student newspaper.

“I spent my whole summer’s wages...  
on books alone”:  
Gettysburg College Student Textbook and  
Course Materials Survey

Janelle Wertzberger  
Sarah Appedu '18  
Mary Elmquist

Friday Forum  
Gettysburg College  
February 28, 2020

And finally, after being inspired by the findings of the Florida textbook survey, we conducted our own version last fall. We just shared results with campus at a public forum two weeks ago. That presentation is also in our IR if you’re interested.

[We had 438 responses to the survey. The group wasn’t statistically representative of our student body – specifically, we had more women, more first-year students and sophomores, more first generation students, and more Pell Grant recipients in our response group than in the student body. We still analyzed the data and shared it, because the experience of first-gen students and Pell students is so relevant to campus initiatives related to equity, inclusion, and student success.]



Created by Adrien Coquet  
from Noun Project



Thank you!

Questions?

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Slides:

<https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/librarypubs/132>

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I'm out of time but always happy to talk more – about any of this!