OER Research Program
Assessing the Impact of OER on Pedagogy

Submission Deadline: Friday, October 11, 2019

Open Education Resources are written materials, creative works, and artefacts found in any medium that can be used for teaching, learning and research and that reside in the public domain or have been openly licensed to permit no-cost access, use, revision, adaptation and redistribution. OER also enhance accessibility and remove barriers to high quality educational products for those who experience disabilities.

Since 2018, CUNY has received funding from New York State to establish, sustain, and enhance new and ongoing OER initiatives throughout the University. The CUNY OER Scale-Up Initiative is working towards large-scale course conversions. The short-term goal of the NYS-funded program was to reduce costs for students and accelerate their progress through college. Of particular interest was the use of OER in high-enrollment general education courses and the creation of zero textbook cost (ZTC) degree pathways. An important secondary goal was to augment the University’s culture of academic achievement by creating systems and structures that better connect curriculum and pedagogy to student learning outcomes.

Access and affordability in higher education have always been central to CUNY’s mission. OER provides an exciting opportunity to address these aims. Several recent studies have found that students save money and have better outcomes in courses in which OER are used.\(^1\) The CUNY Office of Library Services reports that in FY2018 the NYS-funded OER initiative resulted in a savings of $28 million for more than 223,000 students in more than 10,000 course sections. In 2018, CUNY faculty and staff conducted a survey of students at 14 CUNY campuses to assess opinions about participating in Zero-Textbook Cost (ZTC) courses.\(^2\) Students reported an overwhelmingly positive experience in ZTC courses. They liked the fact that the course materials were free and easier to access, and they felt that the use of OER contributed to a better learning experience overall.

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\(^2\) Brandle, Shawna M.; Katz, Stacy; Hays, Anne; Beth, Amy; Cooney, Cailean; Miles, Linda; DiSanto, Jacqueline; and Morrison, Abigail, "But What Do The Students Think: Results of the Cross-Campus Zero-Textbook Cost Student Survey" (2019). CUNY Academic Works. https://academicworks.cuny.edu/le_pubs/245
In 2016 Achieving the Dream (ATD) funded an OER Degree Initiative comprised of teams from 38 colleges from across the U.S. (including BMCC, Bronx CC & Hostos CC). Through this initiative, CUNY was part of one of the most ambitious national OER projects specifically designed to eschew the use of proprietary textbooks and build OER degree pathways using only openly licensed course materials. In its year-two report, ATD stated that “College leaders see OER degrees connected to other institutional strategic goals, including affordability, increased access and equity, decreased time to degree, and improved pedagogy.” It also reports “A number of instructors reported that, with OER, they better aligned course materials with learning objectives and were more intentional about assignments.”

However, the ATD found that in most cases, “teachers did not report that their existing pedagogical practices changed substantially with OER.” The CUNY Office of Research is interested in how (or whether) the use of OER may be leading to a “quiet revolution in pedagogy,” as we suggested in the OER grant program offered by the Office of Research in 2017. In 2011, Ehlers suggested that the OER movement is approaching a tipping point when it could progress beyond the necessary first phase of expanding access and availability to a second phase of improving the quality of learning. What is needed, he concluded, is a growing evidence base focused on the effectiveness of OER.

The CUNY Office of Research invites faculty to contribute to this “empirical evidence base about the effectiveness of OER.” We are soliciting applications from faculty in all departments and disciplines at CUNY two-year and four-year schools who have built, or are interested in building, OER capacity. Applicants should develop a well-thought-out assessment of the impact of OER adoption on one of more of their courses. The application package provides an assessment instrument that may serve as a guide and can be adapted to serve the needs of your course. We will also administer a version of this instrument at the end of the project period to help us with our program assessment.

Proposals should incorporate each of the following:

- A description of the course or courses that adopted or will adopt OER
- Plans to reflect on how and why the applicant chose to adopt OER
- A discussion of how the applicant determined which resources to select and how to incorporate them into the syllabus
- An evaluation of how OER affected pedagogical practices, student participation, and learning outcomes
- A description of how OER contributed to the adoption of accessibility best practices (for more information, please view this link: https://guides.cuny.edu/accessibility/bestpractices)
- Reflections on how the adoption of OER will affect the applicant, including demands on time, ease of use, and interactions with students
- Suggestions for scaling the course

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Awardees who are developing new courses will be expected to offer the course during the Spring 2020 or Fall 2020 semester and submit an assessment report by January 15, 2021. Faculty who have already designed an OER-enabled course should offer the course during Spring 2020 or Fall 2020 in order to submit their assessments reports by January 15, 2021.

Faculty should have some facility with an online platform, e.g. CUNY Academic Commons, Pressbooks, or CUNY’s site on OER Commons, Opened.cuny.edu. See the OpenNYS website for guidance on OER resources: https://www.open-nys.org/adopt/

OER training is available. Please contact oer@cuny.edu for more information.

1. Eligibility
   - All active faculty (including teaching adjuncts, lecturers, tenure-track, and tenured faculty) in all departments and disciplines are eligible to apply.
   - Collaborative projects, involving two or more faculty, are welcome.
   - Projects descriptions must include plans for implementing and assessing accessibility best practices.

2. Proposal Preparation
   Proposals should be a maximum of 3 pages (single spaced, 12-point font, one inch margins).
   - Proposals should list the project title and the name(s), department(s), and college(s) of the investigator(s).
   - Proposals should include a 200-300 word summary.
   - Proposals should either: a) describe the course(s) being redesigned and describe the rationale and purpose of the redesign or b) describe a course that you previously redesigned to incorporate OER and provide a rationale for offering it again during the Spring 2020 or Fall 2020 semester.
   - The body of the proposal should also detail the OER resources that have been identified, and how they have been or will be used. Sample course syllabi can be appended to the application.
   - Proposed projects must employ formative and summative assessment strategies to measure the effectiveness of the course redesign, and explain how the project will measure faculty experiences and student learning outcomes.
   - The project description must include a budget request and itemized description of how the funds will be used.
   - A two-page CV for each investigator that lists courses taught, courses/programs developed or redesigned, and publications related to pedagogy should accompany the application.
   - Any OER-related questions can be addressed to oer@cuny.edu
3. Budget
Budgets of up to $10,000 will be considered. The funding period will be October 28, 2019 – June 30, 2020. Awards will be disbursed as tax-levy funds. We anticipate up to 8 awards will be made in 2019.

Funds may be used for course-related expenses such as supplies and student enrichment activities. For full-time faculty, funds may be used for one month of summer salary in June 2020. Adjunct faculty may apply if they are eligible to receive non-teaching adjunct payments during the Spring 2020 semester. An itemized description of how the funds will be used should be included in the 3-page proposal.

All funds must be spent by June 30, 2020. College budget offices can provide guidance on relevant application deadlines pertaining to tax-levy funds.

4. Submission
Proposals must be submitted by via our online submission system as a single PDF and contain the following:
- Proposal summary with 200-300 word abstract (see template)
- Signature page signed by the campus Grants Officer (see template)
- 3-page proposal including funding request and budget justification
- 2-page CV for each investigator including relevant OER courses and publications

Complete proposal must be uploaded onto the online submission site: http://ybephbsyus.formstack.com/forms/oer2019

Review & Evaluation Criteria
A committee of CUNY faculty and administrators will review each proposal.

Please direct inquiries to:
Effie MacLachlan PhD
Director of Grants & Research Programs
CUNY Office of Research
646.664.8908
effie.maclachlan@cuny.edu

or

Ann Fiddler
Open Education Librarian
Office of the University Dean for Libraries and Information Systems
646-664-8060
ann.fiddler@cuny.edu
Proposal Summary

Project Title

Participating Faculty:

1. Lead PI
   Name:  
   Department:  
   Rank:  
   Campus:  

2. Co-PI (if applicable)
   Name:  
   Department:  
   Rank:  
   Campus:  

(Please insert additional PIs as necessary)

Project Summary (300 words maximum):
Signature Page

Title of Proposal:

(Please insert additional signature lines as necessary)

Faculty Signatures

Name: ____________________________ Signature: ____________________________ Date: _____________
Name: ____________________________ Signature: ____________________________ Date: _____________

Signature of Grants Officer

(Please insert additional signature lines as necessary)

Name: ____________________________ Signature: ____________________________ Date: _____________
Narrative Description of the Project

No more than 3 pages single-spaced, exclusive of references and citations, with one-inch margins and 12-point type.

Proposals should either:  a) describe the course(s) being redesigned and describe the rationale and purpose of the redesign or b) describe a course that you previously redesigned to incorporate OER and provide a rationale for offering it again during the Spring 2020 or Fall 2020 semester.

Detail OER resources that have been identified and explain how they have been or will be used. Sample course syllabi can be appended to the application.

Describe plans for implementing and assessing accessibility best practices.

Describe formative and summative assessment strategies to measure the effectiveness of the course redesign, and explain how the project will measure faculty experiences and student learning outcomes.

Include suggestions for scaling the course.

Include a budget request and itemized description of how the funds will be used.