



OPEN UAS
OPEN EDUCATION



University of Alaska Southeast
Open Educational Resources Action Plan
OTN | Certificate in OER Librarianship 2019

Prepared by: Jonas Lamb
Public Services Librarian, Open UAS Coordinator

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Executive Summary and Strategic Alignment	3
SMART Goals for Open UAS	5
Project Timeline	14
Budget & Resources	15
Outreach & Communication Plan	17
Connection to Campus Strategic Plan	17
Audiences	17
Example OER Pitch	18
Campus Alliances	21
Who We Can Learn From	24
Outreach Products & Resources	24
Sample Outreach Materials	26
Evaluation/Assessment Plan	29
Metrics	29
Reporting	31
SWOT Analysis	32
References	33

Executive Summary and Strategic Alignment

The cost of higher education is a significant barrier to success for many UAS students. Six in ten students in a Florida survey (n=20,000) report skipping the purchase of a required textbook due to cost¹. These effects are observed disproportionately among students typically underrepresented in higher education: first-generation and minority-status students. Studies have found Open Education Resources (OER) can significantly reduce the overall cost of education, and have been demonstrated to be a high impact pedagogical practice².

UNESCO defines Open Educational Resources (OER) as teaching, learning or research materials that are in the public domain or released with intellectual property licenses that facilitate the free use, adaptation and distribution of resources.

OER have been found to increase student enrollment, improve student retention, and promote student success in traditionally underserved student populations.

Open UAS (formerly the Alt-Textbook Project) is an open education and textbook affordability program of the UAS Egan Library and the [Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching \(C.E.L.T\)](#). Open UAS advocates for open education on campus, provides faculty development and support in the discovery, assessment and adoption of Open Educational Resources (OER) and library licensed resources in the classroom. Faculty use of OER signals an awareness of rising textbook prices (and other costs of higher education) and an effort to select course materials with student cost and student success in mind.

Since 2015, OER efforts at UAS have largely been led by a single faculty member who has presented at all-faculty meetings, departmental meetings, provided individual consultations and identified potential OER options for faculty seeking to convert their courses. UAS Student Government and student body in general have engaged in conversations about textbook affordability through articles in the student newspaper, a [resolution of support](#) and participating in the [#textbookbroke](#) campaign. In that same time, roughly twenty UAS faculty teaching 59 course sections have already saved 1100 students a total of \$100,000 by using OER or other affordable course materials!

¹ [Florida Virtual Campus Survey, 2019](#)

² [Watson et al., 2018](#), [Haßler et al., 2016](#)

The OER program has been supported through the inclusion of OER into the workload of one faculty member. However with annual budget and staffing cuts, the addition of these activities and many others into existing workloads, makes this model of leadership unsustainable. An environmental scan and SWOT analysis identified (among other concerns) that any program run by a single person is a weakness.

As a result, the development of an online and on-demand OER training course is the first of 6 SMART goals outlined in this action plan. This course will allow for greater faculty participation than current face-to-face workshop offerings. Also the course outcomes shift away from adoption of OER to focus instead on faculty awareness of the benefits and pedagogical opportunities of OER.

Additionally, connecting the strategic goals of the OER program to the strategic goals of the institution and developing relationships with existing groups working toward common goals on campus (ie Student Success and Retention Subcommittee) will extend the capacity and sustainability of the initiative.

Alignment with UAS Strategic Plan

The work underway on campus to increase faculty awareness and use of Open Educational Resources (OER) is complementary to the objectives of the UAS Strategic and Assessment Plan and the UAS Mission.

At the heart of both these philosophies are the guiding values of:

- **Excellence** through continuous improvement and innovation in teaching....
- **Access** to programs and services through the use of technology, innovative and creative practices, and personalized services.

A 2015 multi-institutional study³ found that students taking courses using OER enrolled in a significantly higher number of credits the next semester (which benefits students and enrollment).

Faculty use of OER represents one strategy in a growing area of Open Education, a suite of learner-centered, innovative teaching practices (Excellence). Use of free, openly licensed course materials which may be customized to be culturally relevant, and available to students on day 1 represent a simple strategy to provide equitable access to higher education (Access).

³ [Fisher, Hilton, Robinson and Wiley, 2015](#)

Access is also central to **UAS Core Theme #1: Student Success**. Affordable and culturally relevant course materials ensure equal access to educational opportunities and safe environments for our culturally and socioeconomically diverse students so they may complete their educational goals.

Among a growing body of research⁴ on the benefits of OER found significant improvement in student outcomes when provided with free course materials. These benefits were even more significant for students eligible for Pell Grants, underserved populations, and part-time students.

As the statewide lead on teacher education, faculty in the Alaska College of Education are uniquely positioned to model the student-centered-learning embraced through Open Educational Practices (**UAS Core Theme #3: Teaching & Learning**). These practices provide students greater agency in their learning, enabling the sharing of their scholarship (beyond the scope of the course/program) in ways that contribute to a public knowledge commons.

In this OER Action Plan I've provided 6 projects that utilize specific, measurable, actionable and short-term (SMART) goals to increase institutional capacity for OER use at UAS.

During Spring 2020 I will develop a draft Strategic Plan for Open Education at UAS (project 6) in which progress toward the near-term goals of projects 1-5 will be evaluated and retooled as needed in order to scale to meet the broader objectives of a long term plan.

SMART Goals for Open UAS

Project 1: OER 101 Course

This strategy addresses and incentivizes flexible professional development to build OER awareness as an incremental step to future OER adoption (secondary level goal). The online and on-demand availability of the course will stretch existing OER training resources.

SMART Goal: By September 1st, 2019 build an online, on-demand OER training program (OER 101 Course) for UAS Faculty utilizing existing CC BY content from

⁴ [Colvard, Watson & Park, 2018](#)

Open Washington and CSUF (OER Ambassador). Apply for Academic Innovation Funding (\$2,000) from the Provost's Office (After July 1st, 2019) in order to provide incentives of \$200 (and a letter of recognition for PT files) for the first 10 faculty to complete the course modules and submit a "next step" based on lessons learned or review (using [OTN/BCcampus rubric](#)) of an OER by November 1, 2019. This strategy targets professional development at building OER awareness as a first step rather than requiring adoption which could be a secondary level goal.

Specific Steps I Can Take:

- Identify components from model courses to incorporate (steps 1-3 can begin immediately).
- Identify environment for course delivery (Open UAS website, Blackboard or other web location).
- Customize content and build course. (by Aug 1).
- Apply for Academic Innovation Funding (after July 1).
- Announce course at Faculty Convocation (Aug 15).
- Continue to market the course (Fall 2019).
- 10 faculty complete course modules & submit next step (Nov 1).
- 10 faculty take a colleague out for coffee to discuss OER. (Nov 31).
- Faculty receive \$200 (departmental prof. dev funds) (by Dec 15)
- Repeat process following academic year or propose continuing/dedicated funding for OER activities from Provost's Office or Student Government.

Potential Collaborators & Resources:

- UAS instructional design
- Cal State University Fullerton [Intro to OER Course](#), [press](#)
- Open Washington, [Learn OER course](#)

Potential Barriers:

- where best to host this course content? LMS, Interactive Pressbooks, other?
- is it necessary to build course in an environment/platform that can provide learner analytics/progress?
- HR, not super clear if I can spend Academic Innovation funds in this way.
- Time

Questions/Issues I Need to Resolve:

- Provost's Office or HR: Can I spend these funds in this way.
- Can I spend funds on hosting web content if necessary?

Desired Outcome(s)

- Increase awareness of OER and the basic functional elements of the 5Rs (Reuse, Redistribute, Revize, Remix, Retain).
- 10 faculty completing the online course share their experience or a key-take away with 10 of their peers to extend the reach.
- Increase OER adoptions.

Project 2: Rethinking Impact: Moving Toward Outcomes Assessment

Currently the OER program measures impact in terms of cost (student savings) and students served. The Open Education Group developed the COUP Framework as an approach to studying the impact of open educational resources and open pedagogy in secondary and post-secondary education. COUP stands for: cost, outcomes, usage and perceptions. In order to advance the impact assessment of the OER program at UAS in terms of student outcomes, a Data Collection Strategy document will be developed in collaboration with various campus stakeholders and data gatekeepers.

SMART Goal: By September 1st, 2019 draft an Open UAS Data Collection Strategy document outlining the various data points collected (consider the COUP framework), how collected, frequency, why collected, how/where shared (public or internal).

Specific Steps I Can Take:

- Identify data points currently collected and source of data (and potential alternative or better sources or workflows for acquiring the data). (July-August 2019)
- Map each data point to a component of the COUP framework (Cost, Outcomes, Use, Perceptions).
- Identify desired data points not currently being collected (student course ratings/comments for courses using OER), potential sources (data gatekeepers or databases/existing reports) for that data and map each point to COUP.
- Consider whether both qualitative and quantitative data are represented in collection.
- Include a statement to revisit strategy in two years.
- Write draft Open UAS Data Collection Strategy by September 1, 2019.
- Share with campus stakeholders by Sep 15 and ask for suggestions/feedback by October 15. Provide several guiding questions to identify suggestions for additional/alt data, data gatekeepers, common interest in student outcomes data, interest in presenting on final product to campus groups.
- Offer appointment times or virtual hangouts to allow face to face discussion of draft.
- Compile recommendations, revise, write an executive summary statement and create visual graphic/metrics of currently collected data (impact chart, Stat-Snap) and share out a final draft by Nov 1, 2019.
- Share with original group who provided input on draft and broader campus stakeholders.

Potential Collaborators & Resources:

- [Sample Data Collection Template with Definitions](#) from Open Education Group
- [Guidebook to Research on OER Adoption](#) from Open Education Group

- [Internal Planning & Reporting Template](#) from Open Oregon
- [Open Textbook Network's Data Collection & Reporting Plan](#)
- [OER Metrics Guide & Toolkit](#)
- UAS Student Success & Retention Committee
- Office of Institutional Effectiveness
- Center for Excellence in Learning & Teaching (CELT)
- Faculty Senate
- Registrar

Potential Barriers:

- Territorial behavior over data
- Acquiring before/after outcomes data.
- Demonstrating causation between OER use and student achievement data
- FERPA
- Technological limitations for harnessing data from existing information systems.

Questions/Issues I Need to Resolve:

- Before identifying new data points to capture, think deeply about what questions or stories I want the data to help tell. Consider outcomes. If I want to tell the story that OER fosters student access, success, retention and agency of their education, be sure to collect the right data by asking the right questions.
- Who are the data gatekeepers on campus and what common goals do we share?

Desired Outcome(s)

- Measure impacts of OER with data to support claims. Move beyond cost impact to capture Outcomes (in terms of student academic success, enrollment, retention, etc).
- Make allegiances on campus, bring in more stakeholders with common goals to the OER conversation. Maybe one of these partners could help build a data dashboard for OER or Library data.
- Regular reporting, [annual report utilizing Cost Savings Stories](#) (quantitative) and data (qualitative) to demonstrate student achievement benefits of OER work at UAS.

Project 3: Faculty Recognition of Contributions to Open Education

SMART Goal: Formalize recognition of faculty contributions to open education to include recognition letters (December and March), more prominent display on website (by Aug 2019), creation of faculty champion videos (by Oct 2019) and public recognition at annual Authors' Reception (Apr) or Faculty Excellence Awards (May).

Specific Steps I Can Take:

- By December (fall adoptions & pubs) and March (spring adoptions & pubs) of each academic year, compile and distribute (email + campus mail) recognition letters to faculty who have adopted OER (or library licensed content) in a course or licensed a recent publication open access.
- Conduct 2 trainings for library staff/faculty on OER consultation, documentation, data capture and tools to support faculty OER exploration and adoption as part of reference desk duties. (Fall 2019)
- Create documentation archive, templates, etc to support above training. (Fall 2019)
- Cross-train library faculty to write/distribute recognition letters in Spring 2020 when I'm on sabbatical. (Fall 2019)
- Create and publish first faculty champion video (by Oct 2019).
- Redesign of Open UAS website to prominently feature faculty champions. (Aug 2019)
- Faculty OER/OA Champions recognized at UAS Authors' Reception. OER award for biggest student savings impact. OA for most scholcom activity published OA. (Apr)

Potential Collaborators & Resources:

- UAS Creative Agency
- UAS Social Media Coordinator (champion videos)
- Provost's Office
- OER Champions Media ([OpenWashington](#), [Affordable Learning Georgia toolkit](#), [UTSA Textbook Heroes](#), [UA Textbook Heroes posters](#))

Potential Barriers:

- Time
- Comfort & confidence of other library faculty to take on additional work to support OER.

Questions/Issues I Need to Resolve:

- Extend this recognition to grant recipients if/when funding for grants is available.
- Inclusion of faculty contributions/scholarship toward the revision and/or creation of OER as an element of scholarship and/or innovative teaching as evaluated in UNAC promotion and tenure guidelines.

Desired Outcome(s)

- Faculty OER champions promote OER to their colleagues and departments by sharing their success stories and challenges.
- Faculty OER champions receive recognition for their development of OER in PT guidelines.

Project 4: OER Awareness Events

SMART Goal: Build on existing OER momentum by hosting 3 events each academic year. Students will be the primary audience though some activities will be relevant to staff/faculty.

Specific Steps I Can Take:

- Register Library & Open UAS for Campus Kickoff 2019, offer “The Price is Wrong” game or #textbook broke photo booth (Sep 2019)
- Include [Student Advocacy Resources](#) ([Student PIRGS](#) + Open Textbook Alliance) along with other library giveaways during new student and library orientations and for [UAS Student Government](#) (fall & spring before elections)
- Host a “Hack the Textbook” OER sprint event (intro to OER, crowdsource discovery) during Open Access & Open Education Week (October & March)
- Bring a guest speaker on Open Education (Rajiv Jhangiani, Robin Derosa, Audrey Watters, Heather Ross) to campus to address a full faculty audience (Aug-Convocation or Jan-Spring Startup).

Potential Collaborators & Resources:

- Student Activities Board, UAS Student Government (SG-UAS)
- Student PIRG, Open Textbook Alliance
- Library faculty/staff
- Library print copies of Open Textbooks (for Price is Wrong game).
- [BC Open Education Working Group Guide | Sprint Toolkit](#)

Potential Barriers:

- Events/speaker budget [dependent on library or partner funding]
- Time for planning events
- Keeping SG-UAS engaged.
- OER Myths, <https://sparcopen.org/our-work/oer-mythbusting/>

Questions/Issues I Need to Resolve:

- Is Student Government willing to organize and lead an event(s)?
- Is there funding to bring Heather Ross to campus?

Desired Outcome(s)

- Increase student awareness of the potential impacts of OER.
- Increase student advocacy for OER and affordable materials.

- Provide faculty an opportunity to engage with a national OER advocate.

Project 5: Identify OER Course Sections

Identifying course sections using no (OER) or low-cost (library resources or other materials <\$50) course materials in semester course schedules will allow students to have a complete picture of anticipated course costs. Policies at the Federal (Higher Education Act) and State level (23+ states) are requiring more prominent disclosure of higher education expenses (including textbooks).

SMART Goal: By October 1, 2019 meet with registrar, curriculum committee chair and faculty senate leadership to discuss current mechanisms/workflows for PCOs and book orders and possible workflows for integrating OER course designations. Until OER course designations are implemented, prior to each semester (May/Summer & Fall Semesters, Nov/Spring semesters) identify UAS courses that do not require a textbook using existing communication channels and conduct outreach to those faculty to collect additional information about course materials and provide information about OER program services.

Specific Steps I Can Take:

- By Oct 1 , 2019 meet with curriculum committee chair and faculty senate leadership to discuss current mechanisms/workflows for PCOs and book orders and possible workflows for integrating OER course designations.
- prior to each semester (May/Summer & Fall Semesters, Nov/Spring semesters) identify UAS courses that do not require a textbook (as indicated on Textbook Order Spreadsheets provided by Arts & Sciences admin) and conduct outreach to those faculty to collect additional information about course materials and provide information about OER, library ebooks and teaching support services provided by library. Any OER courses could be added to the Open UAS webpage for impact tracking and for student awareness of available courses. This information will contribute to better understanding of OER use each semester and to gauge whether there are enough OER course offerings to justify course designation in schedules.
- Share proposal for OER course designation and OER course fee to Executive Cabinet by Dec 2019.

Potential Collaborators & Resources:

- [Higher Education Act: Key Textbook Information Requirement](#)
- [CSU Affordable Learning Solutions HEOA page](#)
- [Texas Toolkit for OER Course Markings](#)
- UAS Registrar, UAS Web Coordinator
- UAS Business Services Office

- MBS Bookstore
- [UA CTE discount](#) and related designations in schedules.



CT 100

CT 102

Save 25%

CT 103

Save 25%

- Open Oregon [Material Costs in Course Schedules FAQ](#)
- [Evaluating Oregon's OER Designation Requirement](#)
- [OER Class Schedule Survey results](#)
- [SPARC OER State Policy Tracking](#)

Potential Barriers:

- Faculty objections to this type of course marking.
- Technical limitations (Banner, UA Online).
- Longer than expected implementation timeline.
- Acquiring comprehensive faculty text adoption data.

Questions/Issues I Need to Resolve:

- Are faculty willing to add materials costs
- Do current faculty textbook order workflows support identification of no-low/cost materials?
- Can MBS support?

Desired Outcome(s)

- Students are able to Identify course sections using no (OER) or low-cost (library resources or other materials <\$50) course materials in semester course schedules in order to have a complete picture of their anticipated course costs.
- Increase visibility of faculty adoption of OER or utilizing affordable course materials..
- More comprehensive text adoption data for reporting impact.
- Procedures for providing transparent textbook pricing and identifying OER adoptions are in place if/when state and federal policies take effect.

Project 6 : Development of Strategic Plan for Open Education at UAS

During Spring 2020 (sabbatical) I will serve as a visiting open education scholar at Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU). One output of the sabbatical will be the development of a plan and vision for infusing UAS teaching, research and creative activity with new considerations for openness, how our work as educators in a public, open-enrollment institution of higher education could facilitate more equitable engagement and contribution to an open knowledge commons. Additionally as an institution responsible for training Alaska's future K-12 teachers and educational

leaders, the integration of open educational practices at UAS will likely extend into their own classroom practices, benefitting the equitable educational access of future generations of Alaskan learners.

SMART Goal: Develop and write a Strategic Plan for Open Education at UAS outlining a 2 year implementation plan for formalizing, funding and institutionalizing, sustainable open educational practices at UAS. Complete a final draft by May 2020.

Specific Steps I Can Take:

- With input from library dean and campus stakeholders, Identify components of this OER Action Plan to include in the Strategic Plan documentation. (Summer & Fall 2019)
- Identify an existing campus committee with common goals to serve in the capacity of an OER task force on campus. Potentially UAS Student Success Task Force (Fall 2019)
- Write Strategic Plan for Open Education (Feb 2020)
- Share working drafts with task force, UAS library dean, UAS Provost, KPU/BCOEL group, UAA Textbook Affordability Committee and Textbook Affordability Fellows (March 2020).
- Incorporate feedback and revise. Final draft shared with above (May 2020).
- Present draft document at Faculty Convocation and host related panel discussion/or listening session (Aug 2020).

Potential Collaborators & Resources:

- Certificate in OER Librarianship cohort
- UAS Student Success Task Force
- UAA Textbook Affordability Committee and Textbook Affordability Fellows
- [OER Strategic Planning Intro/Best Practices guide](#) from Open Oregon
- [KPU: Open Education Strategic Plan 2018-2023](#)
- KPU and BC Open Education Librarians (BCOEL) Group
- Open UAS Data Collection Strategy document

Potential Barriers:

- Budget. Implementation of the Strategic Plan for Open Education at UAS will not be possible without a funding commitment or support for implementation of a [funding model](#) (student fees, donor/foundation) from UAS.
- Personnel. If staffing cuts continue, existing personnel, primarily those serving on committees and task forces with common goals will be unlikely to commit time and resources to the OER program.

Questions/Issues I Need to Resolve:

- Is there enough awareness of the benefits of open education on campus to have enough buy-in to implement a strategic plan?

- Formalize the structure (staffing & programs), vision, goals and budget for OER work at UAS. (by Fall 2020)
- Integrate the OER program within the UAS Strategic and Assessment Plan and UAS Mission. (by Fall 2020)
- Continuation of the OER program despite personnel changes. (by Fall 2020)

The six projects outlined in the previous section will begin (ongoing activities), or be completed, between June 2019 and August 2020. The goals of projects 1-5 are short-term (complete or underway by December 2019), while the strategic nature of project 6 necessitates a longer goal horizon. The Development of a Strategic Plan for Open Education at UAS (project 6) is a component of my Spring 2020 sabbatical.

[illegible]

[Click on timeline or [here](#) to view larger]

Budget & Resources

The OER program at UAS has operated since 2016 utilizing ad-hoc funding, side of the desk contributions by library faculty and support for materials purchasing (print copies of open textbooks, textbooks for library reserves and unlimited user ebook licensing) from the library acquisitions budget. In 2018 and 2019 collaborative proposals were submitted with faculty from the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) for internal grant funding to support OER programs, however these proposals were not funded. Due to these conditions, the OER program remains in the initiating stage of development.

Despite these less than ideal resources (lack of dedicated budget, no dedicated personnel), the OER program has made a substantial impact on campus using available resources (OER faculty advocates, access to limited funding, Provost's support, workshop series, faculty champions, student government resolution of support). Twenty five UAS faculty teaching 52 courses have saved 1,000 students a total of \$100,500 by using OER or library resources. Program investments (library ebooks, math department purchase of print copies) of \$8,000 have contributed \$11 in student savings for every \$1 spent.

In order to institutionalize the program, a dedicated and sustained funding model needs to be established. Funding for OER programs typically are either grant funded or self-funded through several different models.

Self-funding Models:

- **Bookstore:** Students use the familiar bookstore purchasing process to pay for printed OER materials, platform or other support fees associated with reliable, effective OER.
- **Institution-allocated budget:** Common areas for funding include 1) an institutional budget item targeted at improving student success that can be reallocated to OER activities, 2) a course-based OER support fee that is added to OER sections of courses at the time of registration, similar to a lab fee.
- **INTRO (INcreased Tuition Revenue through OER) model:** Studies⁵ show OER improve end of course outcomes and decrease DFW (drop, fail, withdrawal) rates, allowing the institution to retain tuition revenue it would otherwise have refunded. This retained revenue provides a renewable source of funds to

⁵ [Colvard, Watson & Park, 2018](#), [Wiley, D., Williams, L., DeMarte, D., & Hilton, J. \(2016\)](#).

sustainably support the adoption of OER. However these funds can be abstract and difficult to convey to administration.

A multi-institutional study⁶ found that students taking courses using OER enrolled in a significantly higher number of credits the next semester (which benefits students and enrollment).

While these two models (course-based OER fee and INTRO) would greatly benefit the sustainability of Open UAS, a prerequisite project (Project 5: Identify OER Course Sections) must be completed.

I've outlined a budget for AY 2020 and AY 2021 which include a mix of realistic and aspirational funding sources. While the AY 2020 projects included in this action plan can be accomplished with minimal, existing ad-hoc funding sources, the AY 2021 budget assumes greater institutional support either through campus student success efforts or a new OER course fee of \$10 applied to each OER course section.

Proposed OER Budget AY 2020 - AY 2021

Tasks	Year 1 AY 2020			Year 2 AY 2021		
	Summer 2019	Fall 2019	Spring 2020	Summer 2020	Fall 2020	Spring 2021
Learn OER Course						
Awards for faculty completion of modules (q10)		\$ 2,000			\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
Awards for OER adoption/conversion (q4)					\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
Faculty Recognition						
OER/OA Champions T-Shirts			\$ 100			\$ 100
OER/OA Champions Media (posters, videos)		\$ 500			\$ 500	
OER Events						
Guest Speaker		\$ 500			\$ 1,000	
event supplies		\$ 100				
Implementation						
mini-grants for OER Creation (\$1000 per)					\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
Stipends for OER Sprint Participants (\$100/Faculty)					\$ 500	\$ 500
Pressbooks publishing (\$100/book)					\$ 300	\$ 300
Semester Totals		\$ 3,100	\$ 100	\$ -	\$ 8,300	\$ 6,900
AY Totals	AY 2020	\$ 3,200		AY 2021	\$ 15,200	

AY Totals by Funding Source	AY 2020	AY 2021
In-kind funds: library faculty workload or other	\$ 600	\$ 3,200
Provost Academic Innovation Fund	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
Proposed funding: Campus Student Success		\$ 7,000
Funding or OER course fee	\$ 500	
Proposed funding: Student Government	\$0	\$ 4,000

Projected Academic Year Revenue from OER
Course Fee (30 OER sections/AY, 600 students/AY,
\$10 per student/course)

\$6,000

⁶ [Fisher, Hilton, Robinson and Wiley, 2015](#)

[Click on image or [here](#) to view larger]

Outreach & Communication Plan

Connection to Campus Strategic Plan

As illustrated earlier in this document, the work underway on campus to increase faculty awareness and use of Open Educational Resources (OER) is complementary to the objectives of the UAS Strategic and Assessment Plan and the UAS Mission. At the heart of both these philosophies are the guiding values of **excellence** (through continuous improvement and innovation in teaching) and **access** (to programs and services through use of technology, innovative and creative practices, and personalized services). Therefore the aim of this Communications Plan is to outline strategies for better communicating the interconnected values of the OER program and the UAS Strategic Plan to a variety of audiences.

Audiences

Faculty (including adjuncts)

With this audience, I will emphasize awareness building and training on open education as a guiding philosophy rather than specifically on OER. I believe the social-justice and equity aspects at the heart of open education are the most important talking points for training new audiences on open education, especially when these new audiences are already engaged as public educators. This strategy aims to avoid situations where faculty feel their academic freedom is challenged as can be the case if it is perceived they are being told which materials to use and/or how to teach their courses.

Promoting a suite of tools called open educational practices doesn't challenge academic freedom, but instead asks faculty to re-frame their methods and materials through the lense of access, excellence and equity for all-students.

Department Heads (faculty subset)

Due to our small size, UAS doesn't have the high-enrollment, multiple section, introductory courses typically targeted for large-scale OER conversion. However in some areas (Math, English/Writing), department heads may have responsibility for selecting materials for course sections taught by adjuncts. While mandates are not going to be an effective means for achieving OER adoption, there is great potential for impact (student savings, academic performance) in situations where department heads

or course leads influence course design and materials selection for all sections of a course.

Recruitment and Retention Committee (faculty, staff, admin)

With all of the coordinated, cross-department retention efforts happening on our campus, I believe those working on these efforts need to be OER aware and understand the benefits in terms of access and student success. These benefits include; improved end of course grades and decreased DFW rates for all students; improved course grades at greater rates and decreased DFW rates at greater rates for Pell recipient students, part-time students, and populations historically underserved by higher education (Colvard, et al 2018).

From a recruitment perspective, at a time when tuition increases make higher education less accessible, programs offering z-degrees or zero textbook costs represent an appealing marketing strategy. Research studies⁷ indicate students perceive faculty using OER "as more kind, encouraging, and creative than the faculty member using a traditional copyrighted textbook, and that participants would be more likely to take a course with a faculty member using an open textbook than a course with a faculty member using a traditional copyrighted textbook" (Vojtech and Grissett 2017).

Example OER Pitch

Pitch to UAS Strategic Enrollment Task Force: Student Success & Retention Committee

This task force is responsible for developing the UAS Strategic Enrollment Plan that will guide long-term, data-informed planning and implementation of marketing, recruitment, and retention efforts. The UAS Strategic Enrollment Plan must be informed by both enrollment management and academic perspectives, including representation from faculty governance. The UAS Strategic Enrollment Task Force will meet monthly throughout the year.

Thanks for the opportunity to provide the group with an update on the campus open education and textbook affordability initiative, Open UAS. I'm Jonas Lamb, Public Services Librarian and Associate Professor and I've been coordinating Open UAS (formerly the Alt-Textbook Project) since 2015. During that time I've provided workshops for faculty on open educational resources (OER) as alternatives to commercial textbooks. I've also engaged with students who are concerned with the

⁷ [Vojtech and Grissett. 2017](#)

rising costs of higher education and worked with the UAS Student Government on [a bill passed in 2017](#) expressing support for open textbooks and other textbook alternatives. In the simplest terms, Open Educational Resources offer students free, day 1, digital access to course materials.

Today I'll share a story and some research findings to help this body better understand the connection between the goals of your work on student success & retention and those of the open education movement.

Here we stand, on the brink of yet another massive budget cut, enrollments are down, tuition has been rising for years. Despite these challenges, our retention numbers are improving (from 58% to 70% in the last two years!). Now I want you to imagine with me as we add OER and a Retention Grant program to the quiver of retention strategies over the next 2-3 years. See your course sections filling? See your students returning to take your upper level courses? See them actively engaged in their studies now that they have day 1 access to free course materials or in cases where they are forced to choose between rent, food or a textbook they have access to an emergency grant? Now, see them walking across the stage at commencement, completing their degrees without stalling out, without leaving school in order to work and save to make ends meet. This is my vision and I believe the outstanding work you've already done to identify our existing policies and procedures that create barriers for our students, paired with OER and an emergency retention grant program will get us there.

At the beginning of spring semester (2019) I was filling in at the library circulation desk where a student (I'll call him Alex) was asking if his Intro to Accounting course text was available in the library reserves collection. While we do have 1-2 copies of many 100-200 level texts, most are for on-campus courses. We didn't have the book Alex needed but as the conversation proceeded, that was only the tip of the iceberg.

Alex, like many of our students, was unprepared for the additional expense of course materials. I helped him look up the course text on the bookstore website and shared the price with him, \$125 + \$50 for an access card for online homework. At this point the frustration kicked in for Alex. He told me this was his first semester and that he barely covered the tuition and fees for his three courses and was going hungry as a result. He didn't understand why course materials weren't included in what he had already paid for? I shared with him that the campus financial aid office recommends that students plan to spend \$1400 on course materials each year (on top of tuition and fees). Alex told me there was no way he could afford this book.

I also let him know that I'd been working for a few years to teach faculty about free and low-cost alternatives to commercial textbooks and that many courses were moving in

that direction. I suggested he let his instructor know that he couldn't afford the textbook and though he seemed reluctant I told him that faculty care about their students and that he wouldn't get any help if he didn't ask. Alex thanked me for my work on affordable course materials and left the library. He returned a few hours later after lunch and stopped at the reference desk in a panic because he had spilled water on his laptop which seemed to be the final straw. "I've got no reason to keep going," he told me. At this point my concern for Alex went beyond course materials to a concern for his mental health and his life. I provided some advice for how to dry out his computer, let him know about laptops and computers available in the library and tutors in the learning center to help him keep up in his classes. I reached out to the instructor of his accounting class to make sure they were aware of Alex's situation (while also planting a seed for future consideration of OER) and I reached out to the campus care team to suggest a wellness check.

I'm happy to report that I interact with Alex on a regular basis. He found an on-campus job, was able to purchase his textbook with his first paycheck and hasn't dropped a course. Can you guess how many hours he had to work at student wages (\$9.50) to buy that book? 18 hours! That's almost a week of PT work.

So why share Alex's story? It's not unique, as a library faculty member I regularly encounter students struggling to afford tuition, course materials, needing to work two jobs while going to school full-time to cover their expenses even after financial aid.

I share his story for two reasons:

1. OER should be a part of a comprehensive campus retention strategy and included as one of many student-centered policies & programs key to improving learning (and retention). Among a growing body of research on the benefits of OER use, a 2018 study⁸ from the University of Georgia found significant improvement in student outcomes when provided with free course materials. These benefits were even more significant for students eligible for Pell Grants, underserved populations, and part-time students. Another study of more than 20K higher education students in Florida found that 6/10 students elected not to purchase a required text because of the cost.
2. Our campus is beginning to address the various challenges (economic and otherwise) facing our students particularly in the area of food security with the creation of the UAS Food Pantry. Colleges are beginning to recognize the significant difference a small emergency loan or grant can make in a student's life. Georgia State University's [Panther Retention Grants](#) provide funds ranging

⁸ [Colvard, Watson & Park, 2018](#)

from \$300-900 to cover modest financial shortfalls affecting the students' ability to pay tuition and fees and prevents them from stopping their studies or dropping out. In the first year and a half of the program, 86% of grant recipients have gone on to graduate within two semesters!

So here's a quick glimpse at what's being done with OER here at UAS through the Open UAS.

Twenty UAS faculty teaching 52 courses have already saved 1000 students a total of \$100,500 by using OER! If we consider the innovative approach of the Fisheries Technology Certificate which provides students with iPads preloaded with no-cost course content for eight courses that savings increases by \$400K!.

A 2015 multi-institutional study (Fisher, Hilton, Robinson and Wiley) found that **students taking courses using OER enrolled in a significantly higher number of credits the next semester (which benefits students and enrollment).**

Open Educational Resources align well with the objectives of the UAS Strategic and Assessment Plan and the UAS Mission.

At the heart of both these philosophies are the guiding values of:

- **Excellence** through continuous improvement and innovation in teaching....
- **Access** to programs and services through use of technology, innovative and creative practices, and personalized services.

Faculty use of OER represents one strategy in a growing area of Open Education, a suite of learner-centered, innovative teaching practices (Excellence). Use of free, openly licensed course materials which may be customized to be culturally relevant, and available to students on day 1 represent a simple strategy to provide equitable access to higher education (Access).

Campus Alliances

Stakeholder	Why Important + Motivations	Talking Points
University Leadership	Despite efforts for "shared governance," this group still holds closed meetings where major decisions impacting the university are often made. Faculty continue	I will begin to strike a bright line between benefits of OER and the UAS Strategic Plan.

	to demand more transparency and faculty representation on committees however there's resistance from admin and fewer and fewer faculty to share the load of serving on all these bodies. I know that top-down mandates for OER will not be successful but I believe a state policy regarding OER course markings or cost of materials transparency could be recommended to university admin and having OER informed folks in this group would make acceptance of the policy more likely. I believe I have that level of support in the Provost and the Library Dean.	Let's be prepared for new state and federal policy requiring disclosure of key textbook information and/or OER course markings.
Faculty	Faculty at UAS have a high degree of academic freedom and in most cases are directly responsible for course materials selection. Any advocacy, outreach and training I provide to this group has little impact unless OER are adopted or cost of materials is given consideration. Motivations: Many faculty are dissatisfied with the commercial textbooks they assign, whether due to incomplete content, cost or accessibility (reading level) to students or other factors (cultural relevance). Many faculty recognize the inequity among our student body and identify open educational practices as an equity strategy.	The open licenses assigned to OER allow faculty great freedom to remix content from multiple sources to create a better fit for course outcomes, student accessibility and cultural relevance.
Students	Students are most impacted by rising costs of higher education.	Ask your instructor about their familiarity with OER.

	Their ability to be successful and complete a degree are both dependent on their ability to afford their course materials and other education related economic responsibilities. Motivations: Economics are the primary driver but academic success is linked. The student voice can be powerful and is seldom ignored particularly at University of Alaska institutions where students have been baring the brunt of reduced budgets in the form of tuition hikes and program cuts.	Does your instructor already make course materials available at low or no cost? If so, let them know you appreciate it. Share a story with an instructor, administrator, regent about an economic barrier you've encountered in your time as a student. Be sure to also mention that 24 states have policies that support the use of OER as a strategy to make college education more affordable and that Alaska should get on that list.
Bookstore (MBS)	Ideally the bookstore will work with faculty who adopt OER to make students aware of low-cost print options (when available) or to at least display information beyond "no required text" or "see instructor for course materials." In the event we are able to implement OER course designations in class schedules, it would be terrific to duplicate this data in the bookstore context, ie "This is a Zero Textbook Cost section of a UAS course." Motivations: While the primary motivations of the 3rd party bookstore are economic, there is an incentive for maintaining a strong working relationship with our institution. Over the years they have improved the usability of their website and improved upon slow	Many of our instructors are beginning to adopt OER and we're hoping to provide this info alongside with commercial adoptions so that low-cost print options (when available) can be provided.

	delivery. Helping our institution provide timely information about course materials to our students (even if these materials are free OER) would be a goodwill effort.	
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Who We Can Learn From

Institution	Outreach & Communication Strategies	Relevant Links
Open Washington	Present data in narrative, aggregated format as 'stories' in an annual or cumulative report. Prominently features 'OER Stories' section of website with OER Champion videos & transcripts.	https://www.openwa.org/congressional-data-request-on-oer-cost-savings/
CSUF OER Ambassador Program	Emphasize with OER Learn marketing that the process is a competitive one and that there are a limited number of grants (10) to fund the program. Creating deadlines for each phase of the program and making it a "competition" added to faculty interest and the desire to get involved.	http://www.fullerton.edu/openfullerton/of_learn/training.php https://openstax.org/blog/case-study-creating-oer-faculty-ambassadors

Outreach Products & Resources

Audience/Community	Existent Resources	New Resources to Develop
Faculty	OER website (library) OER by subject and reviews by UAS faculty impact stats OER 101 Slide Decks	additional Affordable Content Guides by Subject Online Intro to OER course w badging option [likely adapt Learn OER course by Open Washington]

Students	Making Textbooks Affordable: Student Government Toolkit Textbook Donation program. Our library accepts textbook donations at the end of each term with the goal of expanding our course reserves offerings.	work with SGUAS (student government) to form an Open Education/Textbook Affordability working group to organize awareness and advocacy campaigns utilizing the toolkit (left). develop a campaign to encourage/empower students to speak to or address textbook affordability in student course ratings
Administrators	Annual recognition of Open Education and Open Access Warriors during an Authors' Reception (letter templates) Occasional sharing of outstanding OER accomplishments (obviously this could be more frequent and formalized as an annual report). Inclusion of OER impact info in library StatSnap infographics (put out each semester).	In the next year (and guided by new learning from this course and taking inspiration from the KPU plan) I will be writing a draft Strategic Plan for Open Education at UAS in which I will outline goals, objectives and strategies for growing and sustaining open educational practices in coordination with other campus retention and recruitment strategies. My hope is that the creation of the plan will require bringing in additional campus stakeholders in order to integrate these activities across the institution and to raise awareness of open educational practices as an additional tool for tackling institution wide challenges.
Other Librarians	Currently I provide OER related copy to other librarians for including in their liaison area communications. Informal training on OER discovery and open licensing during weekly meetings.	I've been working with colleagues at University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) to expand faculty/librarian development in the form of a Textbook Affordability Fellows training intensive. I'm working with other UAS library faculty to include open ed related topics in our LS course

		curriculum.
Others? Instructional Designers? Library staff? Specific groups like SGA, Alumni groups, or friends of the library?	Our circulation supervisor is pulling a ton of weight managing our course reserves program which does a lot of proactive placing of materials on reserve even in many instances without faculty requesting we do so.	I need to do so much more in this area. I've shared this article on donor funded OER with the library director and provost but need to put more thought and strategy into making it happen.

Sample Outreach Materials

Ready to Explore? Finding OER

1. Start with one of these resources.



openstax
COLLEGE
openstax.org



O E R
COMMONS
OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
oercommons.org



Open
Textbook
Library
open.umn.edu/opentextbooks

Checkout the **FIND OER** tab at uas.alaska.edu/library/oer
2. Search or Browse for a title in your field.
3. Sample the content, note the available formats, ancillary resources and reviews. Rubric forms are available in Drive if you want to contribute a review.

OPEN UAS

OPEN EDUCATION



Egan Library
and UAS faculty
are tackling
the textbook
problem.

Take a picture of your
textbook receipt and
tweet at us using

#TextbookBroke

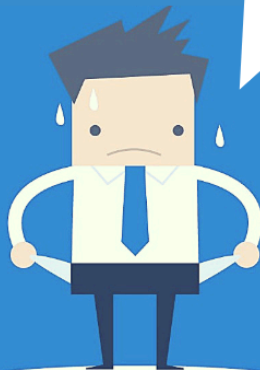
@EganLibrary @USUAS

Share Your Story

Jan 25 @ Lakeside Grill

11:30-1:30

I just spent
\$ **CENSORED** on
textbooks!



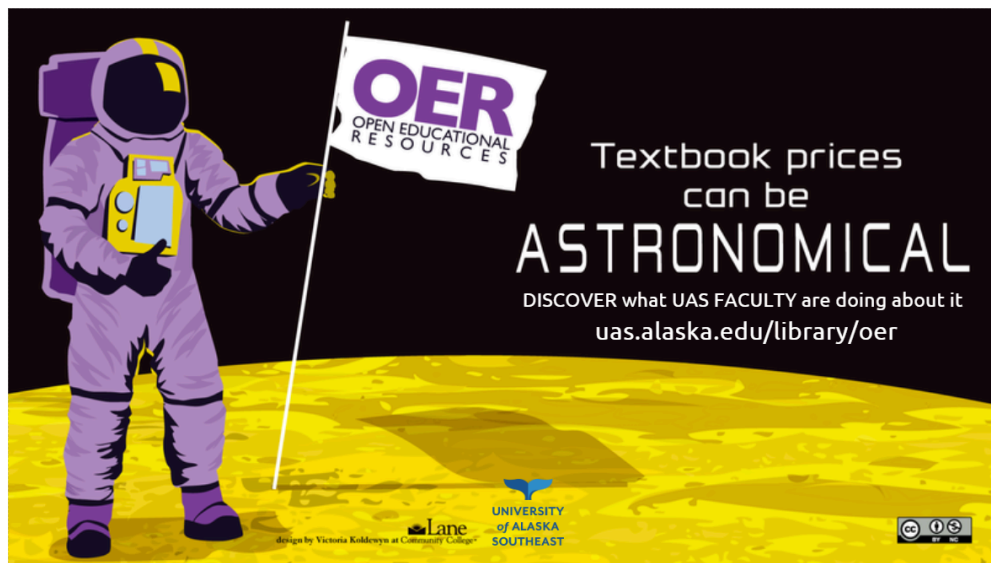


Attention Faculty! Announcing eBooks For the Classroom

The UAS Egan Library will acquire e-Books for classroom support if they are available electronically. This strategy helps reduce costs for students while increasing access to recommended or required readings (and no waiting for books to arrive).

bit.ly/ebooks4class

Talk to your library liaison today!



[Various web graphics]

Take a picture of your textbook receipt and tweet at us using **#TextbookBroke**

our services

- Campus outreach, advocacy and recognition of impact of open education.
- Training and support for faculty use and creation of open educational resources.
- Library course reserves for required texts.
- Ebook purchase of required texts when available.

learn OER

OPEN WASHINGTON OER NETWORK
openwa.org
 Self-paced Learn OER modules cover techniques to incorporate OER into your teaching practice.

FACULTY OER TOOLKIT
pressbooks.bccampus.ca/facultyoertoolkit/
 Guide to adapting and adopting Open Educational Resources. Included are definitions and examples, and tips on how to adapt and/or adopt OER for classroom use.

find OER

OPENSTAX
openstax.org
 Access. The future of education. Peer-reviewed. Openly licensed. 100% free.

OPEN TEXTBOOK LIBRARY
open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/
 Textbooks every student can access and afford. Can be downloaded for no cost, or printed at low cost.

OER COMMONS
oercommons.org
 a public digital library of open educational resources.

OPEN UAS PROGRAM
uas.alaska.edu/library/oer
 a collection of OER by subject (some reviewed by UAS faculty), learning resources for faculty considering OER and impact tracking of UAS efforts.

OER

OPEN UAS
 OPEN EDUCATION

textbook affordability

@UAS
uas.alaska.edu/library/oer

[[Open UAS Brochure](#)]

Evaluation/Assessment Plan

Each of the six projects included in this action plan are guided by SMART goals and therefore have specific outcomes that are measurable and time bound. Assessment of these short term goals will be on the basis of completion of, or progress toward, the identified steps (milestones) and desired outcomes. Completion of these projects will also identify areas for improvement in terms of metrics and program level assessment.

Metrics

Currently program level assessment of Open UAS focuses on the “cost” component of the Open Education Group’s [COUP Framework](#) (Cost, Outcomes, Use, Perceptions) for studying the impact of open educational resources (like open textbooks) and open pedagogy in secondary and post-secondary education. However, SMART goal 2 of this action plan, *Rethinking Impact: Moving Toward Outcomes Assessment* aims to put

pieces in place to capture the impact of OER on student outcomes. Completion of this project will help determine whether Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval should be pursued in order to carry out research related to student academic outcomes. This research, while primarily intended for program development and improvement does have secondary research value in the areas of higher education administration, student success and the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). The Open Education Group's [Research Guidebook](#) contains essential guidance should this type of research be pursued.

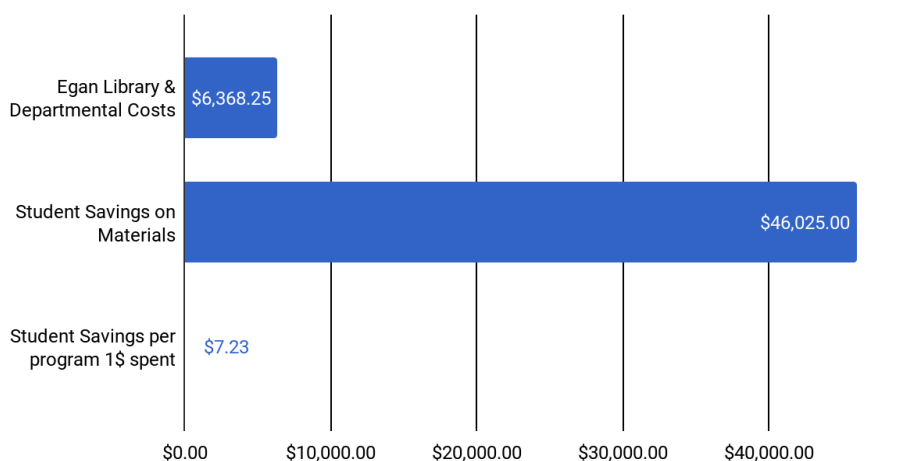
Currently, the following metrics are collected:

- student cost savings (assuming \$100 value of text replaced with \$0 cost x course enrollment)
- # of students served
- # of faculty adoptions
- adoption: year/semester, course subject, course #, instructor, resource used
- resources shared with faculty during OER consultations

As of Summer 2019, the degree of program assessment and reporting could be described as in development. The OER program is fundamentally library led and considered a component of the library's Teaching & Learning program. Enhancement of the OER program was one recommendation following a 2015 program review and in light of the upcoming 2020 program review the timing is ideal for reviewing and refining program goals, assessment metrics and reporting methods.

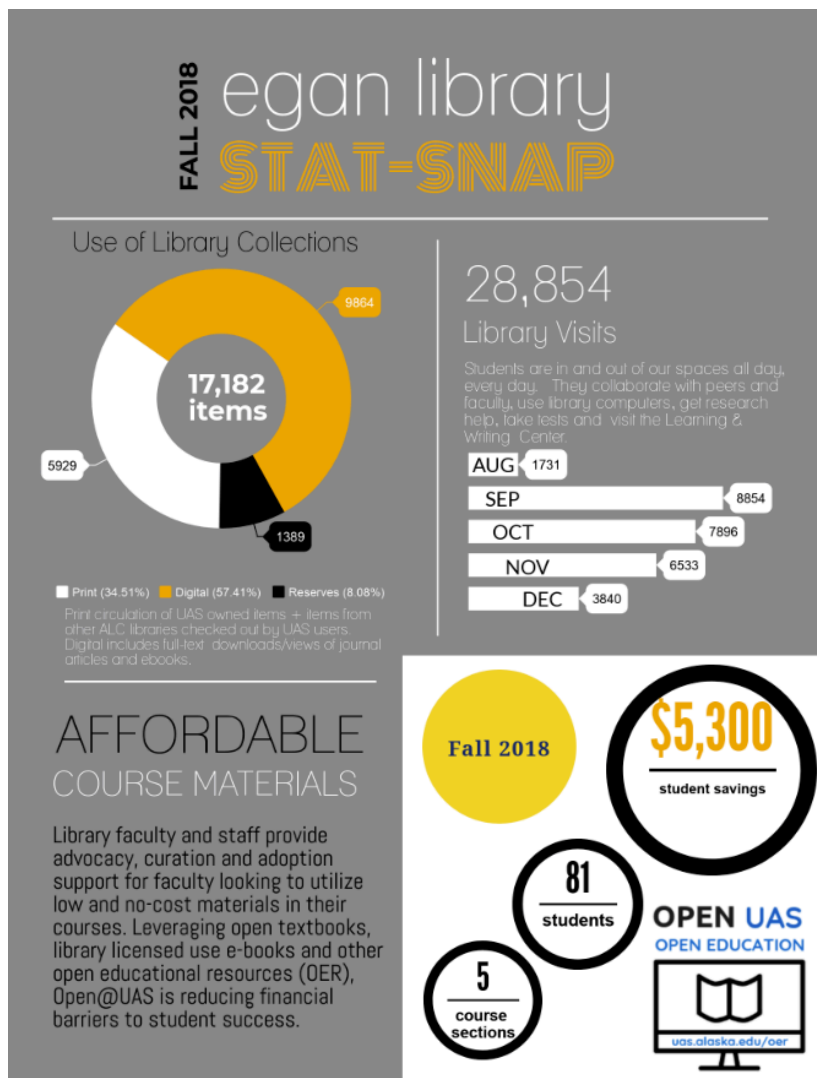
Student Savings Impact | OPEN UAS Project 2016-19

updated Mar 2019



Reporting

Currently, OER program metrics are only summarized and reported in program presentations, on the [website](#) and in Egan Library stats snapshots ([StatSnap](#)). Going forward an annual report (modelled after [OpenWashington](#)) will be created to synthesize and simplify the impacts of the program with an emphasis on case studies and stories. The annual report will be shared with University Leadership, Faculty and the Development Office.



SWOT Analysis

Internal	
Strengths <i>Helpful to achieving the objective</i> • unique academic disciplines/programs (fisheries biology, fisheries management, hatchery tech, AK Native language & art programs) for potential OER creation. • Smallest of 3 state universities, small campus & class-sizes, low student to faculty ratio, faculty are approachable and open to discussing new OER in their content areas. • Digital Fellows program • many local students pursue associates or complete GERs before transferring. GERs are prime target courses for OER with high-enrollments and transferability. • AK Native language learning OER created by dedicated faculty would be unique and open nature increases access to learning resources for critically endangered languages.	Weaknesses <i>Harmful to achieving the objective</i> • perpetual budget crisis • Faculty concerns; heavy teaching workloads, not much time for converting courses, very few summer contract extensions unless self-supported • OER work not yet aligned with other student success & retention efforts. • OER program run by a single person

External	
Opportunities <i>Helpful to achieving the objective</i> • Working to expand collaboration on OER through UAA Textbook Affordability Fellows program expansion (internal grant funding). • Alumni & Donors • Rasmuson Foundation • WICHE Interstate Passport (GER/SLO alignment to improve student mobility/transferability). • University of Alaska Press interest in open access monograph series.	Threats <i>Harmful to achieving the objective</i> • Reduced State Funding • declining enrollments • consolidation of academic programs creating more competition between 3 AK universities for students. • OER Myths related to quality of resources (You get what you pay for). • Aggressive marketing to faculty by textbook publishers

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