UNIVERSITY of ALASKA SOUTHEAST

OPEN UAS
OPEN EDUCATION



University of Alaska Southeast
Strategic Plan for Open Education
DRAFT
2020-2023

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in collaboration with the (pending collaborators: UAS Student Success Committee, UAS Faculty Senate, UAS Egan Library, UAS Executive Council) and in conjunction with the UAS Strategic & Assessment Plan 2013-2019 (currently under revision)

Date: Fall 2020



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Author's Note

This strategic plan is being drafted as the COVID-19 pandemic radically alters the social fabric of the world. Participation in education at all levels (and in other aspects of life) has rapidly shifted exclusively to online delivery. It is too early to understand the long-term impacts of the pandemic on access to higher education or the strategic direction of UAS. However, it is likely that the rapid changes to academic program delivery and the impacts of the pandemic on student enrollment will require reconsideration of prior plans. So it is in this environment of incredible uncertainty that this Strategic Plan for Open Education is being developed.

In the immediate response to pandemic, many resources have been allocated to support faculty as they transition traditional face-to-face courses to online delivery. Resources devoted to faculty development and instructional design in the areas of online instruction could benefit open education strategy (see The New Normal: Using OER to Reopen Education). Additionally, the following factors may impact both faculty and student reliance on commercial textbooks and course materials.

- disruptions in supply chains impacting print book publishing
- closure of retail book stores
- disruptions in mail and delivery services
- rapid shifts of instructional delivery modes (all online or alternative delivery)

In the spirit of openness, this plan has been drafted and will be revised on the open web and published with an open license. **Early readers are encouraged to add comments.**

1. Land Acknowledgement

All of the University of Alaska Southeast campuses, in Juneau, Ketchikan, and Sitka, reside in Tlingit territory. Specifically, our Auke Lake Campus in Juneau is located on the land of the Aak'w Kwaan people. I ask you to join me in acknowledging the Aak'w Kwaan and greater Tlingit community, their elders both past and present, as well as future generations.

2. Introduction

The cost of higher education is a significant barrier to success for many UAS students. Two-thirds of students in a Florida survey (n=20,000) report skipping the purchase of a required textbook due to cost[1]. A nationwide survey[2] revealed similar results. 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 practice[3].

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 or resources.

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

Open UAS 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, creation 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 associated with 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 (for open textbooks) and participating in the #textbookbroke campaign. In that same time, roughly twenty UAS faculty teaching 59 course sections

[1] Florida Virtual Campus Survey, 2019
[2] Senak, 2014
[3] Watson et al., 2018, Haßler et al., 2016

have already saved 1200 students a total of $110,000 by using OER or other affordable course materials[4]!

An informal analysis of 2020 Spring Term, Juneau Campus course offerings found 30% of 418 sections had no required course materials (No Cost section) and 28% assigned low cost (<$40, Low Cost section) course materials. These are promising trends, however 11% (50 sections) required course materials in excess of $200 while another 13 required course materials in excess of $300. These course materials costs represent a significant barrier to student access and success. Work is underway to develop No Cost and Low Cost attributes within the course schedule search to indicate this information (often unplanned expenses) to students. Course materials are the second largest student expense after tuition.

The OER program has been supported through the inclusion of OER into the workload of one library 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, an online and on-demand OER training course (OER 101) was developed in 2019. This course will allow for greater faculty participation than current face-to-face workshop offerings. Also the decision was made to shift course outcomes away from adoption of OER to focus instead on raising 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 University of Alaska Southeast and developing relationships with existing groups working toward common goals on campus (ie Student Success and Retention Subcommittee, Faculty Senate & Curriculum Committee) is beginning to 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 2013-2019 (currently undergoing revision).

[4] Savings= cost difference of new low/no cost resource and replaced resource x student course enrollment.

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 study[5] 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).

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 research[6] 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.

This Strategic Plan for Open Education at UAS builds upon the 2019 OER Action Plan in which 6 projects utilizing specific, measurable, actionable and short-term (SMART) goals were identified to increase institutional capacity for OER use at UAS. Progress toward those initial goals is outlined in section 5 (Context). However, this plan will focus less on operational level activities and more on higher level strategy.

[5] Fisher, Hilton, Robinson and Wiley, 2015
[6] Colvard, Watson & Park, 2018

The development of this plan coincides with the 2020 updating of the UAS Strategic and Assessment Plan and seeks alignment with the mission, vision and values. Current observations of alignment refer to the UAS Strategic and Assessment Plan (2013-2019).

3. Vision

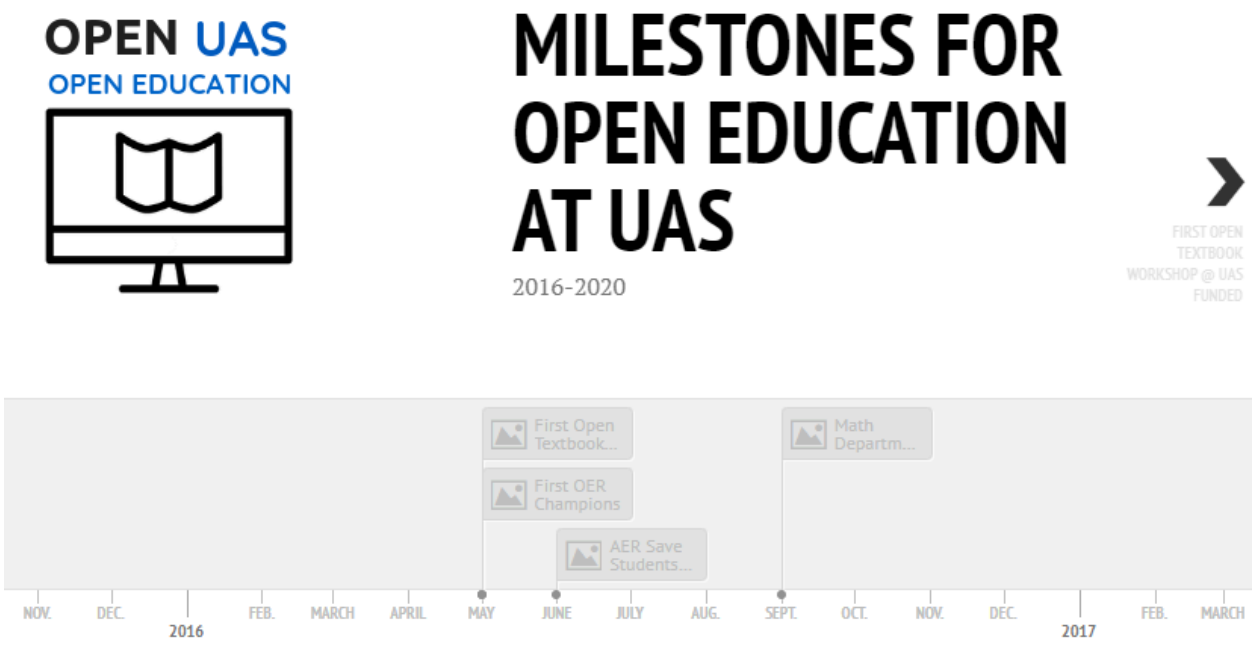
Open Education as a philosophy is rooted in improving equitable access to quality education. This vision is aligned with the following local, regional and global efforts:

- **65 by 2025** (Alaska Postsecondary Access & Completion Network). The Alaska Department of Labor estimates that by 2025, 65 percent of jobs in Alaska will require education or training beyond high school. Alaska ranks 49th in postsecondary access and completion. Achievement of the 65 by 2025 goal will require much more than traditional-age students going on to postsecondary. It will require more Alaskans in every demographic to complete a credential or degree.
- **Quality Education** (United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4). Obtaining a quality education is the foundation to creating sustainable development. In addition to improving the quality of life, access to inclusive education can help equip locals with the tools required to develop innovative solutions to the world's greatest problems.

UAS will be a regional leader in open education, by:

- improving affordable and equitable access to post-secondary programs through adoption of open and affordable educational resources.
- supporting the creation and default adoption of open educational resources with an emphasis on open education in teacher education programs.
- enhancing student success and engagement through the embrace of innovative open pedagogies.
- developing Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) degree pathways (Associate of Arts, WICHE Passport) and formalize/recognize existing ZTC pathways like the Fisheries Technology Occupational Endorsement.

4. Milestones for Open Education at UAS



[External link: view Milestones for Open Education at UAS interactive timeline]

5. Context

In this historical moment, students are facing significant barriers beyond access to higher education. With a shift to online instruction, existing barriers (access to broadband, course materials expenses, challenges associated with online learning) have been amplified. An institutional vision built upon principles of open, equitable and affordable access to education is an important step in overcoming these barriers.

In 2019, in an effort to focus limited resources on short-term obtainable goals, an OER Action Plan was created. The plan was written as a component of the Certificate in OER Librarianship, provided by the Open Education Network with funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The plan was also written before COVID-19 drastically changed the field of education, perhaps necessitating a new set of short-term goals to mitigate the impacts.

The action plan outlined 6 projects utilizing specific, measurable, actionable and short-term (SMART) goals that would increase institutional capacity for OER use at UAS. The plan also served as a short-term placeholder for a broader strategy document to guide and institutionalize the work of open education.

Progress has been made toward many of the goals (summarized below), while work is ongoing for more ambitious projects.

Project 1: OER 101 Course
Status: completed
This project 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. The course includes 6 modules, each featuring interactive features built using H5P. Funding for faculty incentives was redirected to support an Open Ed Speaker in February 2020. Funding for course completion will be revisited during 2020. Visit OER 101.

Project 2: Rethinking Impact: Moving Toward Outcomes Assessment
Status: ongoing
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.

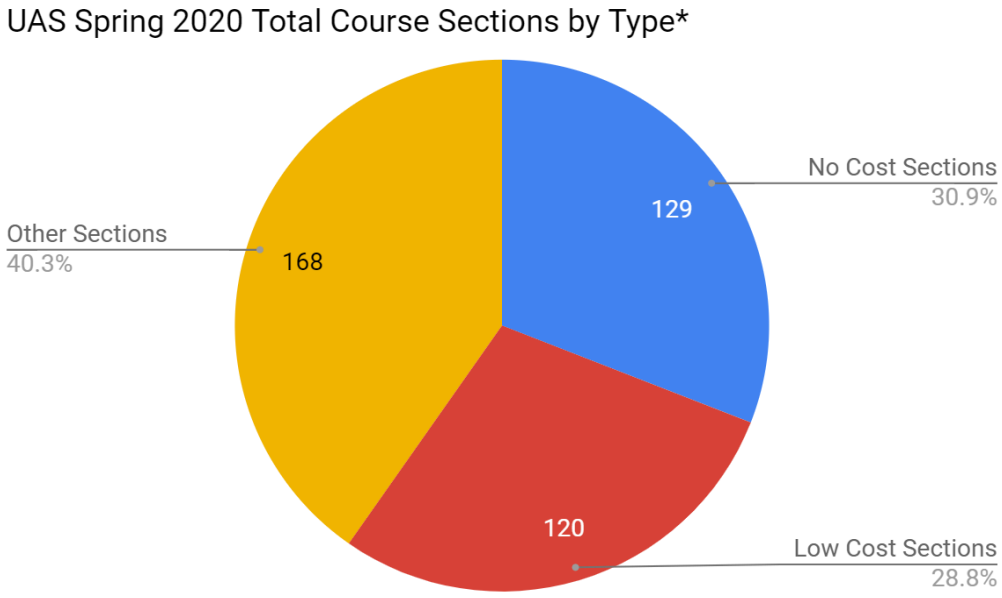
Project 3: Faculty Recognition of Contributions to Open Education
Status: completed and ongoing

Recognition of faculty contributions to open education has been formalized using the following strategies: 1) OER Faculty Champion recognition letters (sample) sent to faculty teaching no and low-cost course sections (December and March) with a suggestion to include the letters in promotion and tenure files, 2) OER Faculty Champions and student cost savings data added to Open UAS website and public recognition at annual Authors' Reception (April 2019 and August 2020). Still pending is the creation of a video featuring an OER Faculty Champion paired with a student testimonial.

Project 4: OER Awareness Events
Status: ongoing
In Fall 2019, Egan Library faculty facilitated an activity called, "The Price is Wrong" at Campus Kickoff and used the opportunity to talk to students about barriers they've faced related to textbooks and about OER and the work UAS faculty have done to reduce course materials costs in their courses. Outreach was conducted to UAS Student Government (Fall 2019 and 2020) and Academic Innovation Funding was utilized to bring Open Ed Fellow Verena Roberts (University of Calgary) to UAS for a faculty workshop (February 2020) on open educational practices [archived video]. However, the impact of future events will be more significant if future OER speaker events are coordinated with full-faculty gatherings like Convocation. The shift of instructional delivery to online paired with sparse student presence on campus is requiring a reimagining of events, at this time there are no Open Ed related events scheduled for AY21.

Project 5: Identify OER Course Sections
status: ongoing
Progress was made during Fall 2019 through conversations with the Registrar and Faculty Senate regarding the feasibility of implementing some degree of course markings in the course schedule related to materials costs. The Registrar and Web team confirmed the technical capabilities and this presentation, No and Low Cost Course Markings in the Course Schedule was shared at Faculty Senate in December. Reception was mixed and no formal Senate action was taken at the time. There appeared to be consensus that this information would be beneficial to students at the point of course registration. The primary friction point was in which data source would be used to identify the cost of a required textbook in order to classify it "low-cost" (>$40). Data provided by the campus bookstore vendor through the textbook adoption workflow process is most easily available, however faculty were dissatisfied with this source. Library faculty will revisit the topic at Senate during AY21 with the goal of finding consensus on

implementation of “no-cost” course section markings at minimum.



[Example of Course Designations based on Spring 2020 Textbook Adoption data]

Project 6 : Development of Strategic Plan for Open Education at UAS
status: complete
With the completion of a first draft completed, next steps will require stakeholder input with a particular emphasis on alignment with the institutional strategic plan.

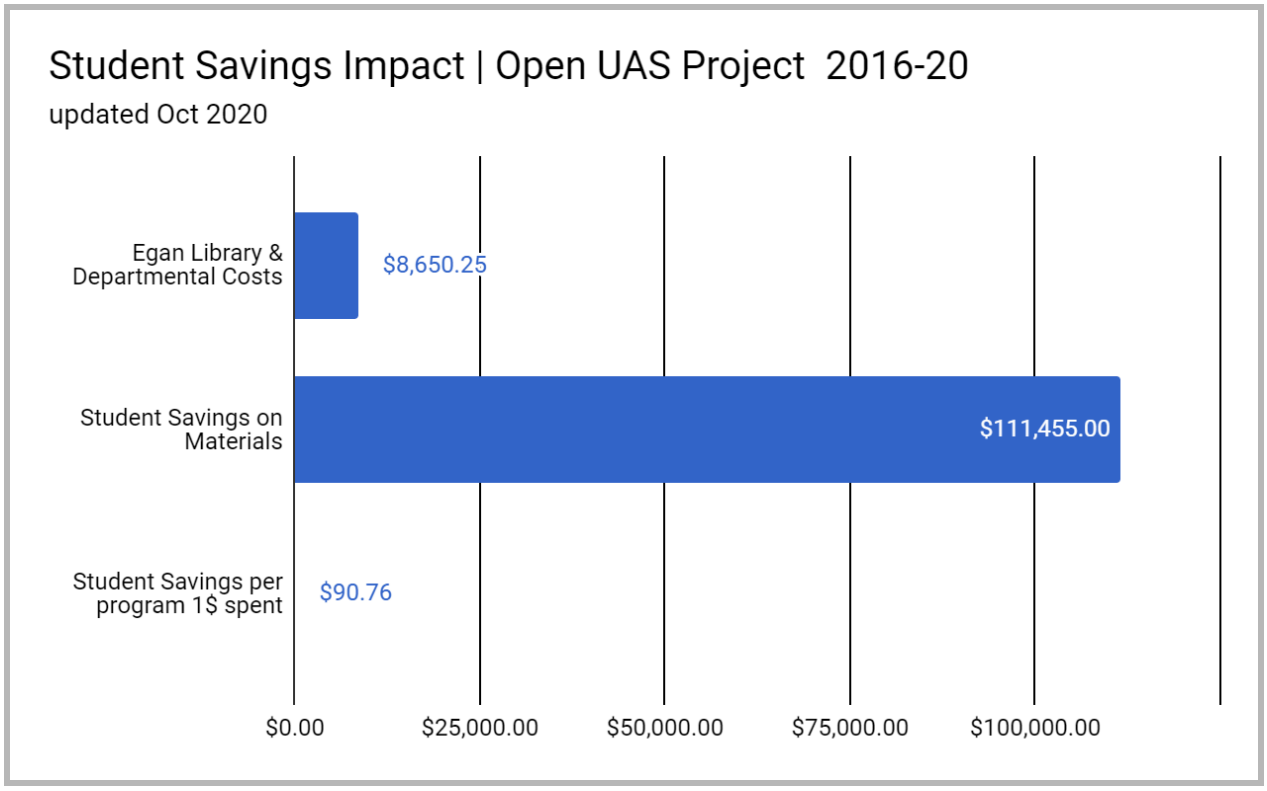
6.Spotlight on OER & AER Adoption

A survey of UAS faculty (n34) conducted ahead of the first open textbook workshop in 2016 found UAS faculty awareness of OER to be 38% (somewhat aware/aware/very aware). At the time that level of awareness was comparable (42%) to findings from national surveys (Allen, E.I., Seaman, J., 2017). In the years to follow, faculty awareness of OER at UAS and nationally has increased, however 1 of 2 faculty continue to self-report they are not aware of OER. Of those aware of OER, many cite lack of openly licensed content in their field as a barrier to adoption. In response, the affordability efforts of Open UAS have expanded to include tracking adoption of affordable educational materials (AER). These materials are generally library licensed

materials (ebooks, journal content) which instructors use in place of a commercial textbook and that have no cost to students.

Adoption of OER & AER in UAS courses has proven difficult to identify using existing course proposals or textbook processes. However, despite these barriers, adoptions are steady. In a typical semester, 8-10 faculty are recognized as OER Champions for their efforts to reduce the cost of course materials in their courses. OER represent only 20-25% of these adoptions.

To date, faculty teaching 54 courses using OER & AER have saved UAS students $111,000.



7. Spotlight on the Fisheries Technology OE



As an example of barriers to identification of OER adoption and institutional silos, in 2018 a Fisheries Technology faculty member presented on innovative pedagogy using openly licensed course materials to deliver asynchronous offline courses. The project was funded by a $2.5M

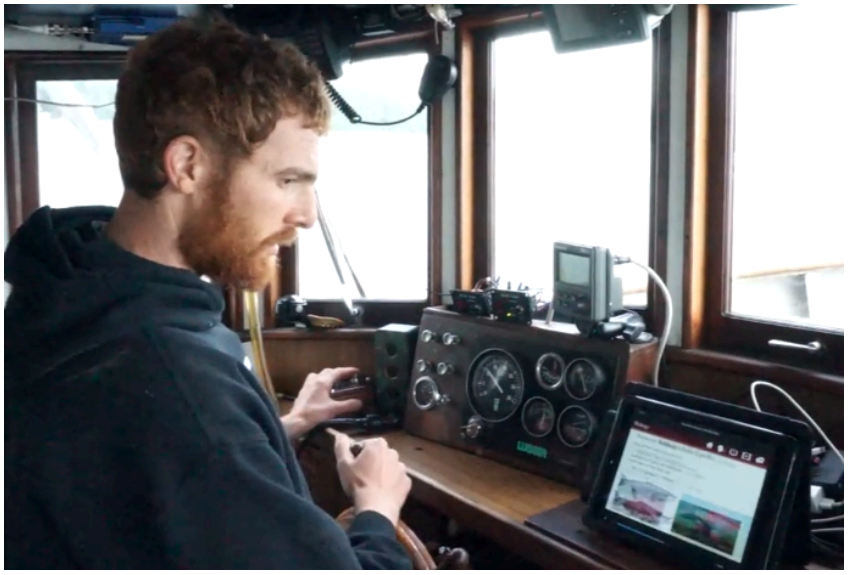
grant (2014-2017) from the US Department of Labor's Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) program. While the TAACCT program has an OER component, the Fisheries Technology work was not identified explicitly as an OER project and was therefore under the radar.

TAACCT program evaluators commented on the innovative approach of the program which, "was transitioning coursework to iPads, including all of the courses necessary for achieving the first credential—an Occupational Endorsement that could be delivered asynchronously and which did not require internet access... The change in program delivery was intended to increase student enrollment and completion."

Land or Sea: Study from Anywhere Fisheries Technology Pathways



Students can attend fisheries technology pathway classes on-campus in Sitka or online using iPads, available to program participants. These "off the grid" classes allow students to complete an entire class independent of the internet. The waterproof iPads (provided as a free loan by UAS) contain all lectures, videos, readings, FAQs, and exams that students can take remotely (Image and Land or Sea text courtesy of UAS Fisheries Technology).



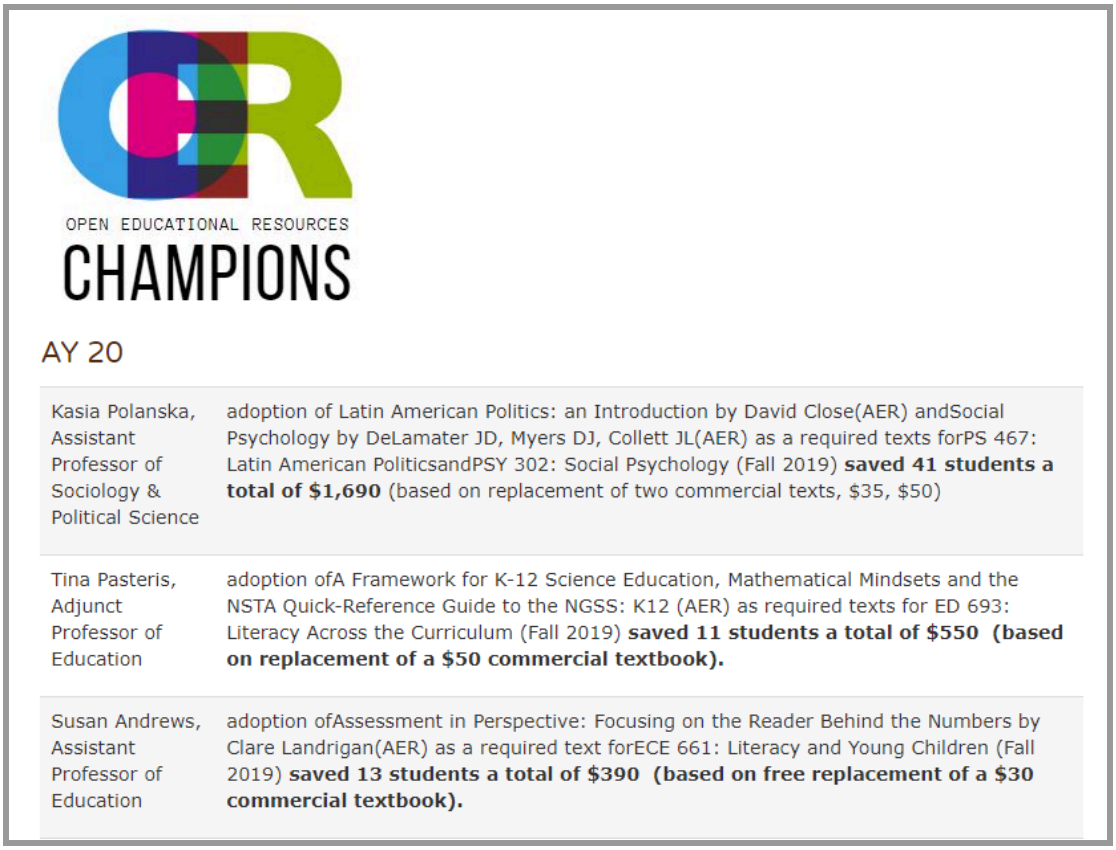
[Image credit: still from film, Class in an iPad- UAS Fish Tech by Owen Richard Kindig]

Post grant calculations and assessment may have turned up UAS's first Zero Textbook Cost program. The Fisheries Technology Occupational Endorsement program utilized a Federal Workforce Development Grant to revamp curriculum for 8 required courses (FT120, 122, 125, 193, 194, 211, 222, 274) to OER delivered via program provided iPads. 118 students (Fall 2014-Spring 2017) saved $94,000 in course materials. This number has reached 275 students and $220,000 in 2019.

Promoting, celebrating and rebranding this program as a ZTC degree (hopefully alongside others) represents a major goal of this strategic plan.

8. Spotlight on Faculty Champions

Recognition of faculty contributions to open education has only recently been formalized using the following strategies: 1) OER Faculty Champion recognition letters (sample) sent to faculty teaching no and low-cost course sections (December and March) with a suggestion to include the letters in promotion and tenure files, 2) OER Faculty Champions and student cost savings data added to Open UAS website and public recognition of champions at annual UAS Authors' Reception (April 2019 and August 2020).


OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
CHAMPIONS

AY 20

Kasia Polanska, Assistant Professor of Sociology & Political Science	adoption of Latin American Politics: an Introduction by David Close(AER) andSocial Psychology by DeLamater JD, Myers DJ, Collett JL(AER) as a required texts forPS 467: Latin American PoliticsandPSY 302: Social Psychology (Fall 2019) **saved 41 students a total of $1,690** (based on replacement of two commercial texts, $35, $50)
Tina Pasteris, Adjunct Professor of Education	adoption ofA Framework for K-12 Science Education, Mathematical Mindsets and the NSTA Quick-Reference Guide to the NGSS: K12 (AER) as required texts for ED 693: Literacy Across the Curriculum (Fall 2019) **saved 11 students a total of $550 (based on replacement of a $50 commercial textbook).**
Susan Andrews, Assistant Professor of Education	adoption ofAssessment in Perspective: Focusing on the Reader Behind the Numbers by Clare Landrigan(AER) as a required text forECE 661: Literacy and Young Children (Fall 2019) **saved 13 students a total of $390 (based on free replacement of a $30 commercial textbook).**

[screenshot from Open UAS > Faculty Champions]

Future initiatives could include features in the Whalesong or Juneau Empire, sharing of Faculty Champions info during Faculty Excellence Awards nomination period, creation of faculty and student testimonial videos to use with targeted development campaigns.



[Faculty OER Champion Golden Award slide from 2019 Authors' Reception]

9. Strategic Goals

Strategic Goals for Open Education at UAS 2020-2023

1. Support the adoption of open educational resources across all Departments and Schools through education, training & support, system & process integration, and recognition.
2. Develop an institutional open education policy building on the Faculty Senate's adoption of an open access policy (2018).
3. Support the sustainable development, growth, and effective marketing of a first Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) program at UAS.
4. Develop publishing support infrastructure and co-op/internships at the Egan Library to facilitate the creation and adaptation of open educational resources.
5. Provide tools, technologies, training, and support for faculty to embrace open pedagogies.
6. Collaborate with external partners in support of UAS open education initiatives.

10. Operational Goals

This section is in progress. Operational goals represent smaller, actionable activities for each of the 6 strategic goals. These activities may be broader in scope than those outlined in the 2019 Action Plan though there is likely to be some overlap.

1. Support the adoption of open educational resources across all Departments and Schools through education, training & support, system & process integration, and recognition.

   Education
   - Ensure that faculty across all program areas are aware of OER
   - Organize campus-wide events during Open Education and Open Access weeks (October & March).
   - Inventory the use of OER across the institution
   - Provide regular communications to the UAS community about open education in order to enhance discoverability and use of OER (monthly newsletter, Faculty Senate report, Teaching & Learning with Technology Roundtable, Student Success Committee, Faculty Alliance OER Workgroup)
   - Grow social media communications and engagement in concert with Egan Library (@EganLibrary @UASopen)
   - Explore moving UAS Open content to uas.alaska.edu/open (instead of uas.alaska.edu/library/oer) to serve as the unified point of contact for faculty and students about open education
   - Feature testimonials from faculty and students who have benefited from open education in promotional materials

   Training & Support
   - Support the development of OER expertise within each Faculty & School
   - Provide face-to-face opportunities for OER training during every semester
   - Provide online asynchronous OER training (additional offerings via https://oer101.open.uaf.edu/)
   - Provide information about OER to new faculty
   - Encourage and provide support for research on OER

   System & Process Integration
   - Integrate OER consideration into curriculum development and review
   - Integrate considerations of OER development or integration in program development and review

- Integrate OER and open textbook adoption reporting into textbook ordering workflows
- Explore local or regional options for print copies of open textbooks (as an alternative to MBS/BN).
- By 2023 secure internal funding for Open Education at UAS (ie OER course fee shared with adopting departments) not relying entirely on ad-hoc and grant funding

Recognition

- Recognize UAS faculty for OER/AER adoption and Open Access publication (Open UAS website, OER Champion letters, Authors' Reception, others)
- Institute an award at convocation for open educational practices (student, faculty, and staff categories) possibly in coordination with Faculty Excellence Awards.

2. Develop an institutional open education policy building on the Faculty Senate's adoption of an open access policy (2018).
    - Work to improve visibility of the existing FS Open Access Policy
3. Support the sustainable development, growth, and effective marketing of a first Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) program at UAS.
    - Goal: Create a Library Science Minor / OE ZTC pathway by 2023.
    - Goal: Create Associate of Arts ZTC pathway by 2023.
    - Goal: Document $500,000 in student savings through OER/AER by 2023.
4. Develop publishing support infrastructure and co-op/internships at the Egan Library to facilitate the creation and adaptation of open educational resources.
    - Formalize partnerships with Alaska State Library, Alaska Library Association, University of Alaska Press to create co-op internship tracks in publishing.
5. Provide tools, technologies, training, and support for faculty to embrace open pedagogies.
6. Collaborate with external partners in support of UAS open education initiatives.

11. Input

If you have feedback about this document that you would like to share, please feel free to add comments directly or send an email to j.lamb@alaska.edu

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