

WSU Open/Alternative Textbook Initiative

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Overview

In the spring of 2019, the Faculty Senate's ad hoc Accessibility Committee, responding to a directive from KBOR to advance the availability of open educational resources to our students, recommended that WSU create a plan to promote use of these resources on campus. The initiative detailed below was developed by the Office of Academic Affairs at the request Senate President Betty Smith-Campbell.

The WSU Open/Alternative Textbook (OAT) Initiative is designed to promote, incentivize, and grow the use of freely-available resources in our classes in an effort to address the rising cost of textbooks and the impact of that expense on our students. This initiative has been adapted for WSU based on the Open/Alternative Textbook Program that has been implemented at K-State, modified to suit WSU's particular needs.

The project has two elements, detailed in this document:

1. The Open/Alternative Textbook Course Designation: Provides an incentive to faculty based on a \$10/student course fee, which will be applied to an approved course that is using Open or Alternative textbooks that have no cost to the students. This money is split between the department offering the course (60%) and the Open or Alternative Textbook grant program (40%).
2. The Open/Alternative Textbook Grant Program: Provides \$2,000-5,000 grants to faculty who apply for the grant to write or contribute to an Open Educational Resource, or other alternative text that can be provided to the students in their course, free of charge. These grants are funded by the course fees, but could be supplemented as funds are available.

Open/Alternative Textbook (OAT) Course Designation

This incentive program is funded by a single \$10 fee paid by students when they enroll in a course that uses no-cost, open or alternative educational resources rather than traditional, commercial textbooks. There must be no other cost to students for textbooks or resources for the course to qualify for the program, although other lab and program fees may still apply. Faculty/instructors who are awarded grants from the Open/Alternative Textbook Grant Program (see below) automatically qualify to have their course designated as an OAT course when their open or alternative resources are ready to be implemented.

Course Fee Assessment and Disbursement

The incentive funding generated by the OAT course fee will be distributed at the end of each semester. 60% will go to the department offering the course and can be used by the department in a way that best supports the program, course, or faculty member in the department chair's judgement. 40% of the course fee revenue will be used to fund future grants in the Open/Alternative Textbook Grant program. For example, if 100 students pay the course fee for one course, then \$600 will go back to that faculty/instructor's department and \$400 will go to the grant program.

The fee is assessed with other fees when a student registers for the class. It will be fully refundable within the standard withdrawal window. In order to promote transparency, a summary of these dispersements will be provided each semester.

How does it work?

Faculty/instructors interested in having their course designated as an Open/Alternative Textbook (OAT) course will need to show they exclusively use no-cost educational resources.

The designation can be applied to one or multiple sections of the same course. A proposed course may include any of the following, or a combination:

- An existing open access textbook (see Resources to Find Open Textbooks below)
- Library resources
- High quality Open Educational Resources (OER)
- Multimedia resources (e.g., audio, video, TedTalks, YouTube videos, Wikimedia Commons)
- Faculty-authored materials (e.g., websites, PDFs, educational presentation slides, lecture videos)

Examples can be found in the Open Textbook Resources section of this document (below).

To qualify as an Open/Alternative Textbook (OAT) course:

- The course must be one that needs course materials.
- The open/alternative resource must be approved by the Open/Alternative Textbook Program review panel.
- The course or course section (if only the lecture uses the resource for example) must not require or recommend any course materials that students have to purchase.

Courses will not be eligible if they include:

- commercial e-text versions of existing print resources
- textbook rentals

How to Apply

In your Open/Alternative (OAT) course application, please provide the following required information:

- Course information (course name, number, expected enrollment, semester(s) offered).
- Information on your Open or Alternative resource (title, format, access point/location).
- How does this resource compare to traditional resources for this course?
- Does the resource engage students in the learning process? How?
- Are there any copyright concerns for the material used? If so, how are they addressed (e.g., are you relying on TEACH Act, fair use, or obtaining permission)?

- How will students access (view/print) the assigned content? Will the resource be accessible via a student's mobile device or smartphone?
- Will the text follow universally accessible design principles? Can the resource be printed? Will the resource meet accessibility standards?
- Will you require support from colleagues, such as the university library, Instructional Design and Access, or other faculty?
- What semester do you plan to use or start using the open or alternative resource?

Program Administration

The Open / Alternative Textbook Initiative will be managed by Academic Affairs with direct support from the Media Resources Center (Instructional Design and Access, and the MRC Web Team specifically).

Application Review

OAT course designation applications will be submitted via web form and initially reviewed by the Media Resources Center to ensure all required information and materials are provided.

A panel will review applications and approve those that meet the standards of the program. The panel will be made up of:

- Two faculty members (appointed by Faculty Senate)
- A representative from University Libraries
- A representative from Instructional Design and Access
- At least one student (appointed by SGA)
- Associate Vice President for Strategic Enrollment Management (ex officio)

Once the panel approves courses for the program, the fee will be added, and a flag will be added so students are aware that the course has been designated as an OAT course.

The course designation will be based on responses to narrative questions above and criteria below:

- Quality and strength of application and how well it meets the requirements
- Ability to be successfully implemented
- Ability to adapt or produce a quality product and actively engage students in the learning process
- Sustainability of the resource beyond the initial use
- Willingness or ability to license the resource for re-use or adaption at WSU or beyond
- Accessibility and usability of the resource for all students (see information provided by the Student Access Center).

Periodic Course Reviews

Once a course has been designated as an OAT course, it will be reviewed every three years to ensure that the standards of the program are still being upheld. These reviews will be conducted by the IDA team, which will flag courses for review if there has been a change in course texts since the course earned the OAT designation. If there appears to be a reason to reconsider the course for inclusion in the program, it will be passed to the committee that reviews applications.

Proposed Rollout and Timeline

This program will be publicized this Fall with a call for submissions of OAT course designation applications due Feb 1; Given that this deadline falls after schedule building has been completed, and the work involved in manually making these changes, Fall 2020 designations will be limited to the first 40 applications (there will not be limitations after this initial rollout).

Future Deadlines

(Scheduled to determine course designations prior to schedule building deadlines):

- May 1 for Spring 2021 course offerings
- Oct 30 for Fall 2021 and Summer 2021 course offerings

Open /Alternative Textbook Grant Program

As funds become available through the Open/Alternative Course Designation program, through grants and other sources, those funds will be used to offer grants to faculty members who write or significantly contribute to Open Educational Resources or who create their own instructional resources.

All WSU faculty who teach a course at WSU can apply for an award ranging from \$2,000 - \$5,000. The award may be used to create open or alternate textbook and resources for a course. It is possible to submit a group application for a grant (ex: development of materials to be used by instructors across multiple sections). The funding would be split between the applicants. The creation of those resources may be individual work to create resources, collaborative work with others at other institutions working together on a resource that will be used by many, or the process of curating and supplementing other OAT resources to produce a course text. The selection process is competitive, and the size of the grant will be based on the proposed scope of work required to complete the project.

How to Apply

Proposals need to provide the required information and address the following questions:

1. Course information (course name, number, section (s), expected enrollment, semester(s) offered)
2. Information on your current textbook (title, cost, estimate on how much students will save by using your open textbook)

3. Open or Alternative Textbook plan (narrative) - 2 page maximum
 - a. How do you plan to go about replacing the textbook in this course? (e.g., use an existing open textbook, adopt an open textbook, gather resources, or develop materials)
 - b. Have you obtained proper permission, if needed, for your resource(s)?
 - c. What format(s) will be used (e.g., PDFs, e-book, video, etc.)?
 - d. How can students access the open/alternative resource(s)?
 - e. How will the students be engaged in the learning process?
 - f. What are your anticipated outcomes?

Courses using the following materials are *not* eligible for the grant:

- commercial e-text versions of an existing print textbook
- textbook rentals
- existing textbook alternatives already in use by faculty; the proposal must be a new project

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Application Review

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A panel will review applications and approve those that meet the standards of the program. The panel will be made up of:

- Two faculty members (appointed by Faculty Senate)
- A representative from University Libraries
- A representative from Instructional Design and Access
- At least one student (appointed by SGA)
- Associate Vice President for Strategic Enrollment Management (ex officio)

Proposals will be evaluated and selected based on:

- Quality and strength of application
- Potential savings to WSU students (expense of resource replaced, number of students impacted)
- Ability to adapt or produce a quality product and actively engage students in the learning process
- Ability to be implemented in the coming year
- Sustainability of the resource beyond the initial use

- Willingness or ability make the resource available as an Open Educational Resource
- Accessibility and usability of the resource for all students
- The availability of acceptable OAT texts that are publicly available for the subject matter (we will evaluate whether this OAT is duplicating existing work or creating new OAT options that do not already exist in the marketplace)

Proposed Rollout and Timeline

The grant program will be launched in the Spring 2020 with initial support from the Office of Academic Affairs, future grants will be provided as the textbook incentive program generates additional funds to support more grants.

A call for applications will be sent out in the Spring of each year, indicating how many grants can be awarded. Applications will be due at the start of the fall semester.

May 1 deadline for AY 2020-21

Open Textbook Resources

Open Educational Resources Repositories

OASIS ([SUNY's Openly Available Sources Integrated Search](#)) is a tool that searches for OER content from more than 70 sources.

Both of these repositories contain open textbooks along with a wealth of other open educational resources.

- [Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching \(MERLOT\)](#)
- [Open Educational Resource \(OER\) Commons](#)

In addition to [MERLOT](#) and [OER Commons](#), the following sites offer open textbooks:

[The American Institute of Mathematic Open Textbook Initiative](#) - Contains links to open textbooks that meet AIM's evaluation criteria.

[BCcampus OpenEd](#) - Find or adapt textbooks that are openly licensed for reuse in 40 subject areas.

[Boundless Courses](#) - This catalog contains educational content originally curated by Boundless. Subjects include: Accounting, Art, Biology, Business, Chemistry, Communication, English, History, Mathematics, Physics, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology.

[College Open Textbooks Collaborative](#) - A collection of twenty-nine education organizations that are focused on driving awareness and adoptions of open textbooks. They offer training for instructors adopting open resources, peer reviews of open textbooks, and mentoring online professional networks that support for authors opening their resources, and other services.

[LibreText](#) - begun at the University of California, Davis, LibreText offers resources across twelve disciplines (almost 400 items) and has dozens of contributing institutions.

[Open Course Library](#) - Textbooks, syllabi, assessments, in 81 high-enrollment college courses created by a Washington State Board for Community & Technical Colleges (SBCTC) grant.

[Open Stax College](#) - Through grant funding, Open Stax College is producing free open textbooks for high enrollment college courses using the ConneXions platform. Subjects include: College Physics, Introduction to Sociology, Biology, Concepts of Biology, and Anatomy and Physiology.

[Open SUNY Textbooks](#) - A collection of Open Educational Resources (OER) adopted across [SUNY](#).

[The Orange Grove](#) - Florida's digital repository, contains links to a variety of open textbooks.

[The University of Minnesota Open Education Initiative](#) - UM created a catalog of open textbooks and is providing \$500-\$1000 stipends for faculty members to review and adopt these resources.

[Wikibooks](#) - A collection of open-content textbooks built on a Wikipedia-like platform.

Textbook Accessibility Resources

[BC Open Textbook Accessibility Toolkit](#) - *The Accessibility Toolkit* provides the needed resources for each content creator, instructional designer, educational technologist, librarian, administrator, and teaching assistant to create a truly open and accessible textbook -- one that is free and accessible for all students.

[KSARN.org](#) – Kansas Accessibility Resources Network, which provides training and resources that provide an introduction to document accessibility challenges and solutions.

Courses

"[Adopting Open Textbooks](#)" Peer-to-Peer University, 2015. (Not an active course, but content is archived.) Includes the following learning outcomes:

1. Find, evaluate, modify and adopt an open textbook
2. Build your network by finding and connecting with educators interested in open education and open textbook
3. Define and describe the following terms: open education, open educational resources (OER) and open textbooks
4. Explain why open education is important
5. Identify problems that open textbooks may address
6. Correctly identify Creative Commons licenses and use them appropriately in the context of open textbooks
7. Identify common challenges for faculty who want to use open textbooks and define strategies to help mitigate those challenges.