Open Education Initiatives in Kansas Higher Education

Executive Summary and Report

Kansas Board of Regents OER Steering Committee
https://www.kansasregents.org/academic_affairs/open-educational-resources
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Executive Summary

On March 28, 2023, the KBOR OER Steering Committee distributed a survey to all public higher education institutions in Kansas. This survey was created to gather baseline information on how open educational resources (OER) are currently being implemented across the various colleges and universities in the state. The 2023 survey represents the third year this survey has been distributed. After reviewing the responses to the 2023 survey, major findings were identified:

There has been no change in the number of institutions with a policy, program, or committee to support OER.

16 of the 30 responding institutions indicated that they have a policy, program or committee to support OER use on campus. Breaking out by institution type, this included all 7 Universities and 9 of 15 community colleges. Among those who did not have one established, only 5 of 14, including the University of Kansas Medical Center, indicated they are exploring the possibility of adding a policy, program, or committee to support OER.

Access to grant money, a huge driver of OER Initiatives, is missing from most institutions

7 of 7 universities and two community colleges have incentive/grant programs. This is one more than last year, but still a net-negative of one community college when individual institutions are accounted for over the last three surveys.

Additionally, only two institutions, Emporia State and Johnson CC, have led grant applications. None of these were awarded.

Time, resources, and awareness are challenges to OER adoption. Funding/support was the most common support or service indicated to overcome these barriers.

In line with last year's assessment, common challenges to OER adoption reported were lack of time, resources and awareness. Funding/support was the most commonly indicated support or service to overcome these challenges.

Introduction

Open educational resources (OER) "are teaching, learning and research materials in any medium–digital or otherwise–that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions[1]**."** That is, OER include built in permission to retain, reuse, revise, remix, and redistribute the material[2].

Since 1967, the cost of educational books and supplies (which is primarily textbook costs) has increased over 2000% compared to an 800% increase in the overall consumer price index[3, 4]. The Consumer Price Index reports that the cost of college course textbooks increased 88 percent from 2006 to 2016, compared to an increase of 21 percent for all items[5]. Because of their high cost, many students forgo the purchase of textbooks due to limited funds, putting them at a disadvantage. In 2019, the Kansas Board of Regents Student Advisory Committee conducted a survey to demonstrate the burden of textbook costs on students at Regent Institutions. They found that 48 percent of 6,474 regent institutions' students indicated they did not purchase or rent a required textbook in the spring semester. 16 percent said they did not purchase or rent three or more required textbooks[6]. With OER, all students get equal and immediate access to educational materials.

The cost of textbooks is having a deeper impact on college students. A 2018 survey of 1,651 former and current students found that "Thirty percent of survey respondents said they had forgone a trip home to see family, 43 percent said they skipped meals, 31 percent registered for fewer classes, and 69 percent worked a job during the school year–all to save money for books[7]."

There is also evidence that student success is positively impacted by replacing commercial textbooks and materials with OER. In a recent analysis, there was a 29 percent decrease in the risk of college students withdrawing from open textbook courses (78.593 students) compared to commercial textbook comparison courses (100,012 students)[8]. Learning outcomes were equal between the courses. In the University of Georgia system (21,822 students), students in courses using OER had a final GPA that was significantly higher than courses using traditional textbooks, and DFW rates (students earning a grade of D, F, or withdrawing from a course) decreased compared to non-OER courses. Further, they found OER course student improvements in GPA and DFW rates were greater among Pell recipient, part-time, and non-white students that had lower rates of student success[9]. Content tailored to a course by the instructor is a contributor to student success. After financial savings and easy access, customization was the third most cited benefit by K-State students[10]. Several other

states, like Colorado, Georgia, Oregon, California, and New York, have been pushing OER implementation for years, and students in their systems are reaping the benefits.

Who We Are

To encourage OER use across public institutions in the state of Kansas, the OER Steering Committee was created in 2019 and is made up of representatives from all Kansas public higher education institutions who are interested in learning more and expanding OER use across our system.

We understand that OER are not the only answer to the problem of expensive course materials; however, we would like to increase awareness of these resources and the work being done to make them better for students and instructors in Kansas.

This survey was created to review and quantify the work being done to support OER adoption and creation across the state. After the baseline established by the 2021 survey, 2023 provides similar challenges and subtle changes that we hope informs the future of OER's use and benefits in the state of Kansas.

Participants

The survey was sent to the chief academic officer at each institution to direct to the appropriate respondent to accurately answer the survey questions.

30 of the 33 public higher education institutions in Kansas completed the survey, which was an increase of one from last year's baseline. Respondents include 18 community colleges, 4 technical colleges, and 7 Universities, including the University of Kansas Medical Center. A full list of the institutions who replied to the survey can be found in Appendix B.

Results

16 of 30 institutions indicated that they have a policy, program, or committee to support OER use on campus. Breaking out by institution type, 7 of 7 Universities (the University of Kansas Medical Center is considered its own type of institution and is not aggregated with the others), 9 of 15 community colleges (Barton, Johnson, Butler, Allen, Kansas City Kansas, Seward, Colby, Cowley, and Coffeyville), and 0 of 5 technical colleges have a policy, program or committee to support OER use. Among those who did not have one established, 5 of 14, including the University of Kansas Medical Center, indicated they are exploring the possibility of adding a policy, program, or committee to

support OER. Data show an increase of one policy now known to be in place compared to last year as well as two additional institutions exploring policies.

Respondents ranked the role institutional entities played in coordinating institutional OER initiatives (Figure 1). Library and Academic Departments were the most highly ranked, whereas previous years ranked administration higher than departments. Details provided identified English as most frequently departments that are leading OER initiatives.
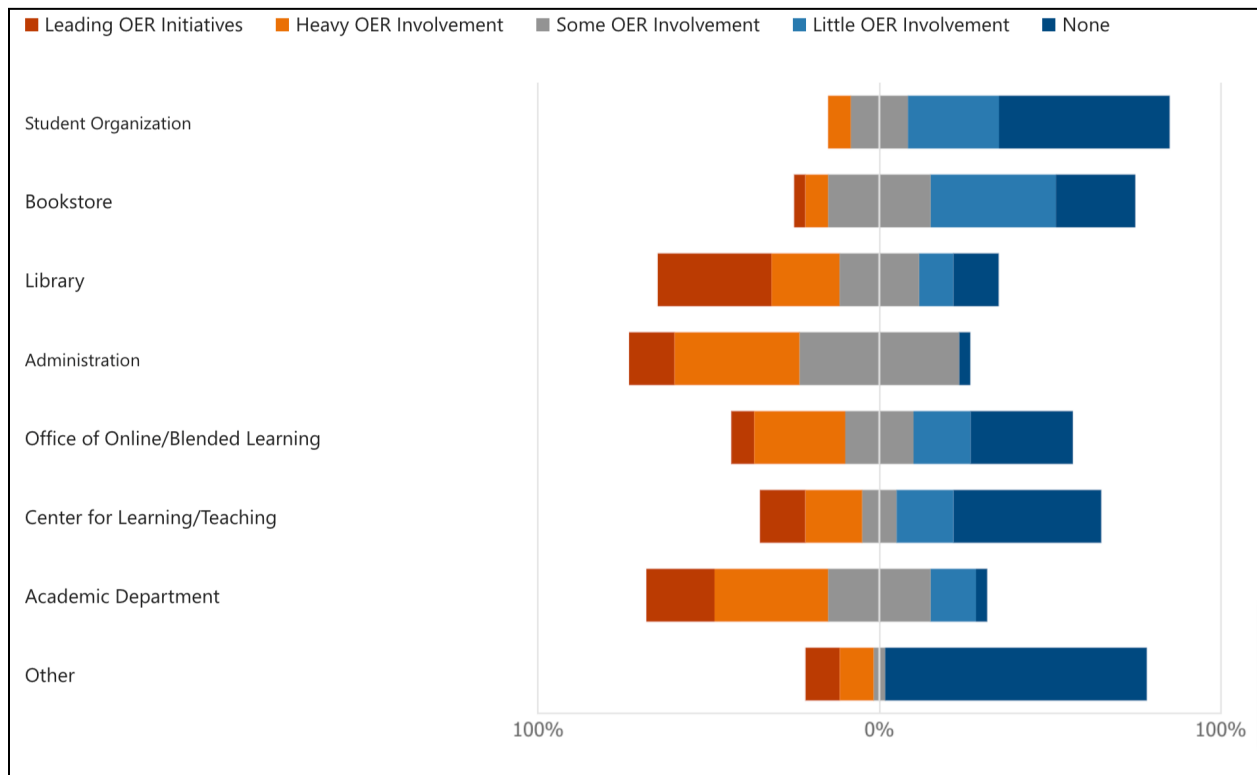

Figure 1. Reported ranking of roles institutional entities played in coordinating institutional OER initiatives

Among the practices that were reported to be in place, Professional Development support, OER Committee/Working Group, and Instructional design support were the most commonly available (Figure 2). 7 of 7 Universities along with Butler County Community College and Colby Community College were the institutions that reported having OER incentive/grant programs or other funding with Kansas City Kansas Community College reporting having a program in development. This shows a modest gain after losing incentive programs at Johnson County Community College and Wichita State University in 2022.
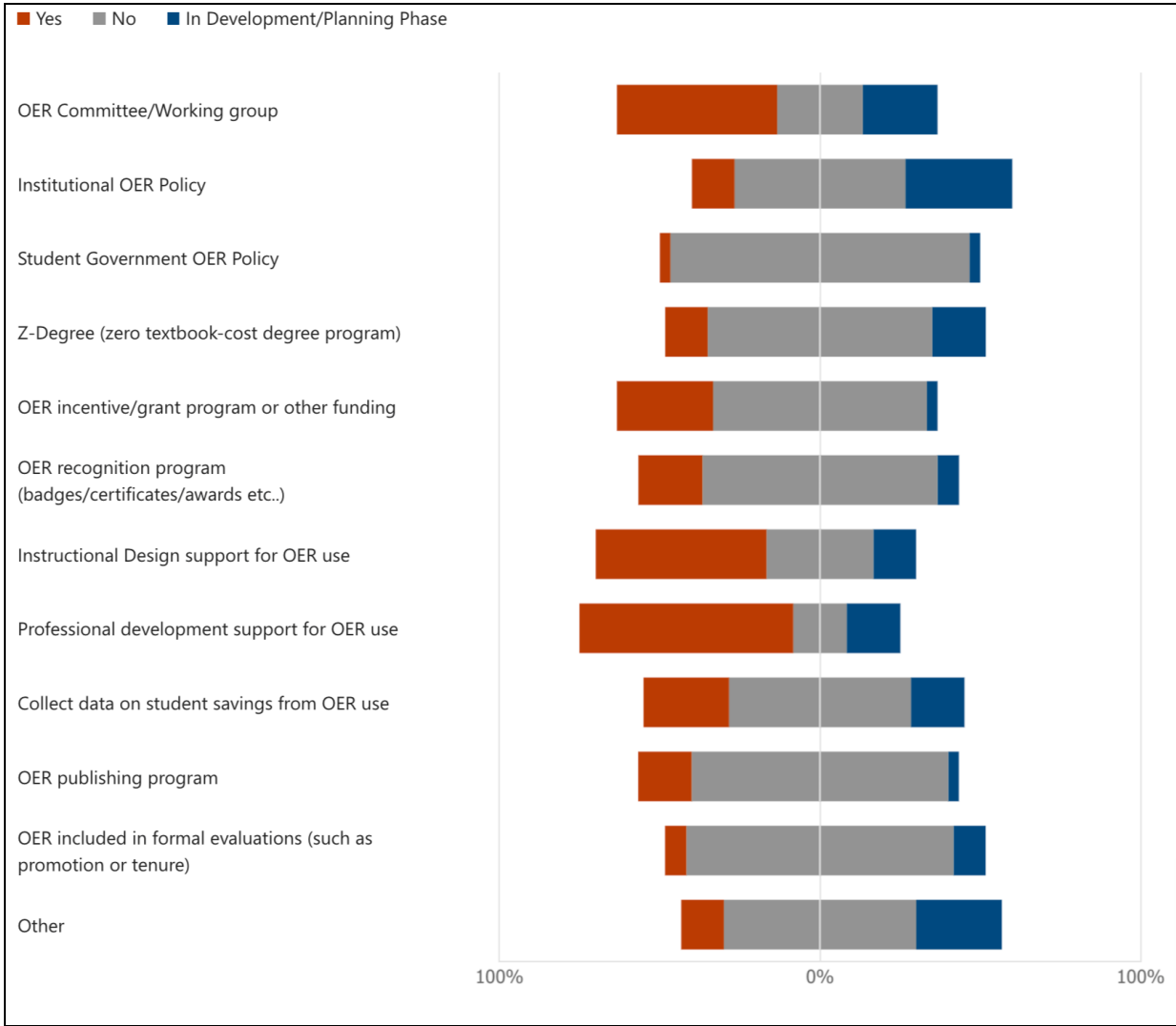
Figure 2. Reported practices currently in place to support OER

The library, bookstore, and administrators were reported to be more aware of OER than students and faculty (Figure 3).
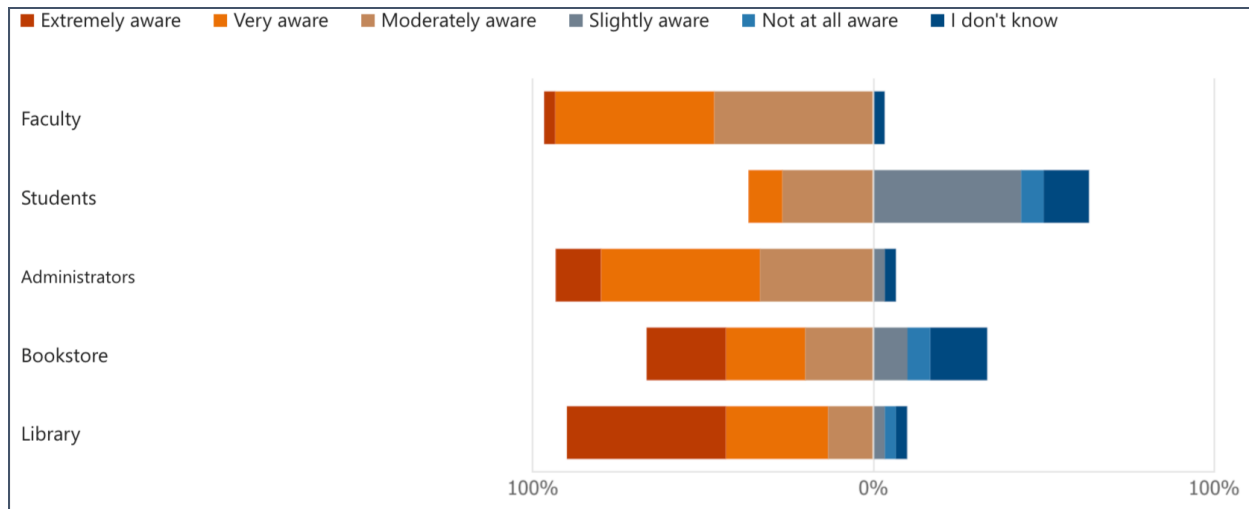
Figure 3. Reported Awareness of OER

Breaking this down by different institution types, reported faculty awareness was higher at community colleges than Universities, but lower at technical colleges (Table 1). Reported student awareness was low and similar among different types of institutions. Reported administrator awareness was similar between technical and community colleges but lower at universities, which were higher in prior years. Reported bookstore awareness was much higher at Universities and community colleges than technical colleges. Reported library awareness showed great disparity between the three institution types, though still some of the highest awareness across institution types.

Table 1. Mean OER Awareness by institution types

Institution Types	Faculty	Students	Administrators	Bookstore	Library
Universities	2.4	1.6	2.3	2.6	3.8
Community Colleges	2.7	1.4	2.9	2.6	3.1
Technical Colleges	2.3	1.7	2.8	1.3	2.3

Calculated by assigning scores as follows for responses: 0 - Not aware at all, 1 - Slightly aware, 2 - Moderately aware, 3- Very Aware, 4 - Extremely aware, I don't know - no score assigned.

The reported percentage of instructors at institutions that are utilizing OER as their primary course resource in at least one of their courses is relatively low, with less than 1% and 1-5% the most common responses (Figure 4). However, unlike last year, the 6-10% category has grown.
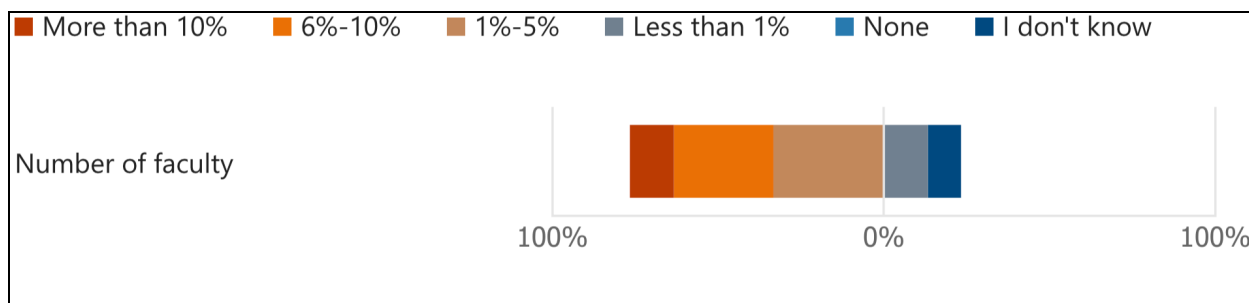
Figure 4. Reported percentage of instructors at institutions that are utilizing OER as their primary course resource in at least one of their courses

All seven Universities have implemented OER/free/low-cost course marking, as well as Barton and Butler Community College. This fulfilled Butler's previous indication of planning for course marking. The other institution that indicated planning for course marking in 2022, Colby Community College, is now joined by Highland Community College, Kansas City Kansas Community College, and Hutchinson Community College in course marking planning and development.

Most institutions cited a lack of resources as the leading barrier for OER adoption. Universities frequently cited a lack of time and funding for OER to be adopted as well as infrastructure and sustainability concerns. Support units like dedicated staff and librarians for material review, selection, and faculty support were included. University reported challenges can be found in Appendix C. In addition to time and fiscal resources, faculty perceptions of interest and material quality were frequently cited by community colleges and technical colleges. Attitudes expressed that were critical of OER also appear with time and comfort/change resistance challenges. Full reported challenges for community and technical colleges can be found in Appendices D and E.

Among support or services referenced, Universities most commonly reported that funding/support would help overcome challenges to OER use. Full University responses can be found in Appendix F. Community Colleges cited funding, including grants and modeling course fees implemented at other institutions, as possible avenues. They also highlighted promotion and training. Full Community College responses can be found in Appendix G. Technical Colleges reported concerns that material may not yet be available for some career and technical education audiences, but also cited funding. Full Technical College responses can be found in Appendix H.

Conclusion

These survey results will help inform our approach, activities, and strategies as we seek to continue to support the growth and development of OER throughout Kansas higher

education. We greatly appreciate the time taken to complete the survey and look forward to conducting similar surveys in the future to understand OER progress and changes throughout the system.

Appendix A

Works Cited

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Appendix B

List of Institutions Participating in the Survey

1. Allen Community College
2. Barton Community College
3. Butler Community College
4. Cloud County Community College
5. Coffeyville Community College
6. Colby Community College
7. Cowley College
8. Dodge City Community College
9. Emporia State University
10. Flint Hills Technical College
11. Fort Hays State University
12. Fort Scott Community College
13. Garden City Community College
14. Highland Community College
15. Hutchinson Community College
16. Independence Community College
17. Johnson County Community College
18. Kansas City Kansas Community College
19. Kansas State University
20. Labette Community College
21. Manhattan Area Technical College
22. North Central Kansas Technical College
23. Northwest Kansas Technical College
24. Pittsburg State University
25. Pratt Community College
26. Seward County Community College
27. University of Kansas
28. University of Kansas Medical Center
29. Washburn University
30. Wichita State University

Appendix C

- We are working on it. The support of KBOR and the LibreText availability will be a huge boost.
- External funding for course release timeLibrary editing, uploading of resources; Money/resources to free up time.
- Tools to support the creation and adaptation of OER.
- Funding to compensate faculty for adopting, adapting and/or creating OER.
- Funding for course releases/stipends for two or three faculty leading OER efforts on campus.
- A list of recommended OER textbooks/platforms/ancillary materials for high enrollment courses.
- Access to support/training for faculty interested in OER adoption/adaptation/creation.
- Recommended reward structures for instructors; what incentives are most valued by instructors so they are both empowered and attracted to use OER if/when it meets their needs?
- Data: help surveying students and instructors about their knowledge, needs, experiences, etc. Also help analyzing that data.
- Enhanced OER training and development; additional technical support for course management implementation
- Grants to pay faculty to develop OER texts where none exist, funding for more OER initiatives.

Appendix D

Reported Challenges (Community Colleges)

- Information on what other colleges are doing for fees.
- More money in the state budget.
- More focused marketing about savings in regard to OER use.
- Do a better job promoting OER development/course integration with pd funding and credit
- Offering incentives to adopt
- Providing examples/trainings regarding quality and student benefits
- state-level funding partnerships or grants
- None.
- Time to research the various OER options is important.
- Sharing what other institutions are using in courses and programs would be helpful.
- In the process of developing a way to train faculty to understand OER a little better
- Support funding for OER development.
- Funding
- I think that the additional instructional support that Libretexts or other software could be beneficial to make OER transition easier and more robust.
- Academics has identified innovation funding to cover the cost of release time for the creation of new OERs, sustainability is always a focus to ensure future generations of students will benefit from the work current faculty and the institution is doing to remove access and barriers for students.
- Additional Instructional Design Support

Appendix E

Reported Challenges (Technical Colleges)

- N/A
- Providing more support to faculty to find resources
- training on the benefits of OER

Appendix F

Support or Services to Help Overcome Identified Challenges (Universities)

- While not OER; the library provides key textbooks through our subscriptions that are utilized free by students.
- We need to keep plugging away at it. When we began this plan, I warned the Provost it would be a 8-10 year ongoing mission. We are about halfway through and making progress, but we need to guard against apathy.
- The OER Steering Committee continues to focus on educating others about OER:
    - 1. Fourteen faculty attended the OEN Faculty Training provided on campus and eleven submitted reviews of textbooks in the OEN library.
    - 2. Rion Huffman and Susan Dellasega represented Pitt State at the Kansas OER Capital Showcase.
    - 3. Ruth Monnier and Kristen Livingston provided an OER presentation at Professional Development Day.
    - 4. Six Pitt State faculty volunteered to be OER Liaisons for the KBOR OER Steering Committee: Irene Zegar, Alex Binder, Michelle Hudiburg, Rion Huffman, Barth Cox, and Michele Barnaby.
    - 5. Three Pitt State faculty served on the KBOR Discipline-Specific OER Roundtables: Irene Zegar, Alex Binder, and Michelle Hudiburg.
    - 6. Jennifer Pursley represents Pitt State on the KBOR OER Steering Committee and co-chairs the KBOR OER Trainers subcommittee.
- Current users and those starting their OER projects are enthusiastic and committed. I hope to reinvigorate the established OER programs and promote their adoption and use in the libraries and across campus over the next couple of years so OER can have an increased impact on teaching and learning at KU. There is now a dedicated Open Education librarian position working on OER. My participation in the OEN Certificate in Open Education Librarianship program will provide additional training and an Action Plan to help move the current OER programs forward.
- slow but steady progress with faculty; ZTC initiatives are driving student savings and increased rate of faculty OER adoption
- We have been making steady progress.

Appendix G

Support or Services to Help Overcome Identified Challenges (Community Colleges)

- Any statewide trainings or professional development on OER implementation and use would be great.
- We are very open to using OER but based upon prior answers, we have not been able to move forward very fast.
- Not at this time.
- N/A
- I hope the transfer course alignment creates partnership opportunities for collaboration between institutions in identifying or creating OER materials that can be endorsed across campuses.
- No.
- The students are anxious to see more OER courses! Students love the savings, and faculty enjoy the wealth of resources they are able to give to students.
- none at this time
- We are over $650K now and we did it not by focusing on student savings and access, but by focusing on what the faculty wanted to achieve in their courses, what they needed to reach those goals in terms of support, and how OER could play a role in achieving those goals. I don't think instructional design and pedagogy is a large enough conversation in OER adoption or adaption.
- Overall, the OER initiatives at Butler have been a success, and we are now working to scale up our initiatives and make them sustainable
- We work with student who are often in the lower SES and could benefit from low and no cost textbooks and resources. However, funding remains an issue.

Appendix H

Support or Services to Help Overcome Identified Challenges (Technical Colleges)

- The academics department tries to support and coordinates with learning management system and instructional designer coordinator to assist faculty on utilization of OER resources.
- I am all in favor of saving students money, but OER may or may not have what is needed for career/tech ed. For general ed, I very much like OER and have found some great curricula to adopt.