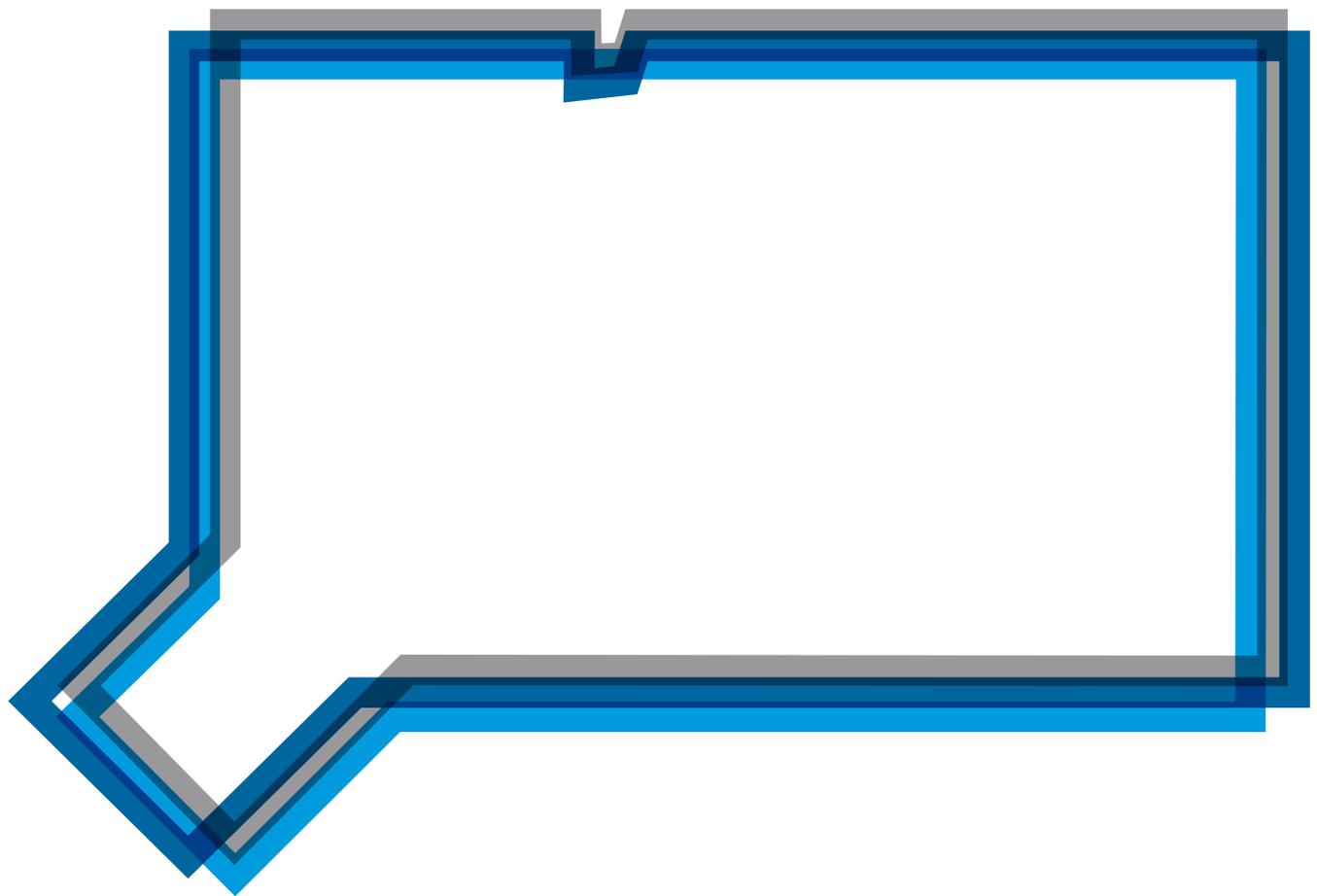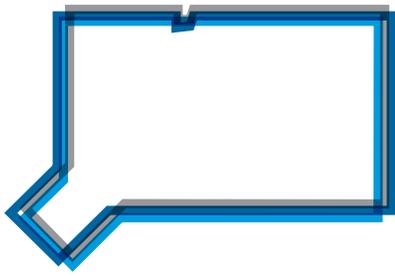# Connecticut
Open Educational Resources Coordinating Council

2021 Legislative Report

CT OER Coordinating Council
2021 Legislative Report
Executive Summary

Roughly 2,000 students saved over $265,000 from the 2020 OER Grant work

In addition to the 1,184 students across 60 different course sections who have avoided over $171,000 in textbook cost during the 2020 grant period, an additional 800+ students were reported to have benefited from the 2020 grant work in future semesters to save an additional $94,000+

1,821 students saved $227,000 because of our 2021 grant program

The 2021 CT OER Grant Program totaled $58,750 across 34 awards at 17 different institutions —10 of those being first-time institutional applicants. Of the 34 awards, 32 proposals contained first-time individual applicants. 1,821 students saved more than $227,000, a return on investment of **3.9x**

Since the grant program started, students saved $492,000 across 165 course sections

Across the first two years of the grant program, over 3,800 students have benefited from efforts related to the grant work across a minimum of 165 course sections resulting in over $492,000 in savings

According to a survey of 28 CT institutions,

OER saved students $2.8 million last year.

Data captured from our 2021 survey showed 23,779 students saved $2,782,143 in one academic year. The CT OER Grant Program contributed to these reported savings and will continue to produce a year-over-year benefit.
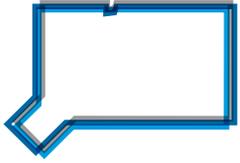
Open Educational Resources in Connecticut

CT OER Grant Program:
High Impact Support for Students

"...no cost of college life has increased faster than textbooks."

The Washington Post

January 2020

Between 1978 and 2019, textbook prices increased more than three times inflation: **+812%**

According to a report by Follett

To tackle the problem, the CT legislature created the Open Educational Resources Coordinating Council, which launched a grant program in 2020.

In 2021, its second year, the Council awarded **$58,750** for students to access textbooks in high impact courses in 17 schools statewide.
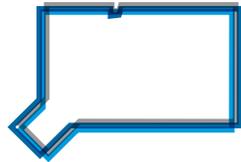
$227,000

$58,750

State Funding

Benefits to Students
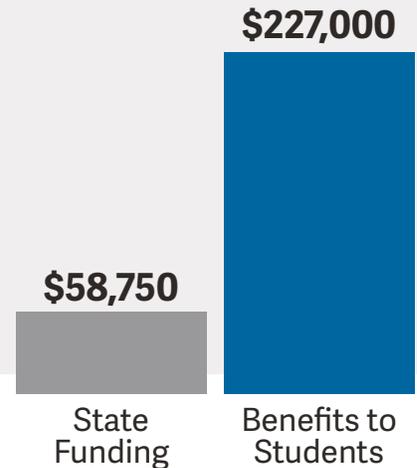
1,821 students in 105 course sections avoided $227,000 in textbook costs

The state's investment has resulted in a considerable impact on students, nearly a **4x** return on investment

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OER & Equity

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken an unprecedented global toll, the ramifications of which we will all be contending with well into the future. For many of our students, the impact of the pandemic has been catastrophic: financially, emotionally, and physically. Additionally, we have seen a growing racial-justice movement running alongside the pandemic, which has laid bare many of the structural inequities present in modern American society. Higher education has a role to play in addressing the impacts of the pandemic and the structural inequities many of our students contend with daily. One method for addressing inequities is through the adoption of open educational resources (OER) in our classrooms which will mitigate the difficulties students face in affording and accessing instructional materials in a timely manner.

Another method for addressing inequities is through the creation or revision of OER to better reflect our students and their needs. Learning materials that reflect the students and their experiences can lead to better engagement and achievement. **New America** presents that "using texts, materials, and examples that draw from students' cultural schemas and background knowledge makes learning easier because it leverages students' existing neural pathways." **Achieving the Dream's** Garth-McCullough and Sebastian state though the use of OER "Professors can design courses that meet standard benchmarks while reflecting students' prior knowledge and experience."

One way to ensure diverse representation within our learning materials is to include the students themselves as authors. A teaching practice entitled Open Pedagogy invites students to co-create and/or contribute to OER works. This approach not only grants students an opportunity to apply core concepts and skills to new instructional materials; it also provides an opportunity for a public portfolio that serves the public good.

> *By adopting, revising, and creating OER, we can help build equity in our classrooms by guaranteeing our students have day-one access to free, quality instructional materials that are flexibly licensed to allow instructors to utilize them to meet their instructional goals and the needs of their students.*

2019-2020 Council Efforts

Public Act Number 19-117 established the **Connecticut Open Educational Resources Coordinating Council,** a 17-member standing body representing faculty, staff, administrators, and students from the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities (CSCU), the University of Connecticut (UCONN) and Connecticut's independent institutions along with ongoing administrative support from the Connecticut Office of Higher Education.

The statewide body was charged to develop a plan for Open Educational Resources to benefit college students throughout Connecticut. In response, the Council crafted an OER Grant Program to provide funding opportunities to faculty for the review, adoption, and/or creation of OER materials. In addition, the Council designed and delivered an annual OER Summit to provide professional development opportunities for faculty and staff.

To determine the focus of both the grant program and summit, the council utilized a statewide survey to identify the courses and programs with the highest student enrollments. 25 out of 40 institutions responded with data on over 284,000+ enrollments to help craft the top 20 enrolled course subjects.

The Connecticut OER Grant Program was launched in conjunction with the Connecticut OER Summit held on February 28th, 2020 at Goodwin University in East Hartford, CT.

For its inaugural year, the CT OER Grant Program received 35 applications with the council awarding 31 proposals that represented 13 different institutions and a sum of $43,800.

Based on the reported data, 1,184 students across 60 different course sections have avoided over $171,000 in textbook costs, which represents an estimated 4x return on the investment of $42,800. These savings will continue to be realized each semester that the courses are taught. Beyond savings, student performance and persistence had positive outcomes. On average, 90% of those students completed their coursework with 79% of those students receiving a letter grade of 'C' or better.

CT OER Coordinating Council

In 2020, the CT OER Coordinating Council launched the inaugural **CT OER Grant Program.**

This program is designed to support OER usage in 'high impact' course areas with high enrollment and the high textbook costs.

SINCE ITS LAUNCH...

1,184 STUDENTS benefited from the CT OER Grant Program **in just one semester**

SAVING OVER **$170,000** as students avoided the cost of commercial textbooks

90% PERSISTENCE students successfully completed their coursework as they were better prepared and engaged with OER

PERFORMANCE **79%** nearly 80% of the students within the OER grant program earned a grade of C or better

THE STATE'S INVESTMENT RESULTED IN A **4X ROI**

CT OER Coordinating Council

2020 Grantee Survey

In September 2021, the council issued a survey to the 2020 CT OER Grant Program awardees to measure the continued impact of their grant work. Of the 25 awardees (representing the 31 grants), 11 responded to the survey. Those individuals represented 2-year, 4-year, public, and private institutions.

73% of the respondents indicated that they continued to use the funded OER in subsequent terms; 64% shared their OER works with other instructors teaching the same course; 27% reported that they revised/expanded/improved the adopted OER; 36% reported that they adopted different OER for other courses that they teach; and lastly 27% evaluated different OER for courses that they teach.

Most respondents continued to utilize their grant funded OER in Spring 2021 (91%) and Fall 2021 (82%) while some ran Winter 2020 (18%) and Summer 2021 (36%) sections, suggesting an ongoing return on investment for the grant program's funded work.

An additional 800+ students benefited from the continued use of OER from our 2020 awardees. Using the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) OER Savings Calculation Method which presents the average cost savings/avoidance for student usage of OER at $117 per course/section, we conservatively project the direct cost savings/avoidance to be over $94,000. With many respondents reporting that additional instructors have adopted their works and that they have explored OER for other courses, the indirect cost savings from the 2020 Grant Program could be even greater.

> *Over 800 additional students benefited from the 2020 CT OER Grant Program work, estimated to have saved over $94,000 across the Spring, Summer, and Fall 2021 semesters.*

On top of the additional cost savings generated, some grantees reported greater student engagement and even student involvement in the creation of new OER:

> *Using Open Pedagogy, my students created videos to illustrate the earliest American sociologists. They posted these videos on You Tube. Their work will matter because, if earliest European sociologists work like Marx, Durkheim, or Weber are mainly discussed, it is not the same for earliest American sociologists. It is my hope to continue this work in future semesters and have my students create OER material of better quality (in the sense that it is an art to make educational videos). I will use the videos created in my Sociological Theory courses.*
> **—2020 Grant Awardee**

2021 CT OER Grant Program

Program Improvements

After the completion of the 2020 CT OER Grant Program, the council revised the grant application process based on feedback from council members and previous applicants. Improvements included clarity around OER licensing and grant completion requirements. To aid proposal reviewers, applicants were asked to include greater detail in the justification of the proposed work and the specific materials being adopted and/or created.

Specific enhancements made to the 2021 CT OER Grant Program were:

- **Grant Information Webinars** – multiple information sessions provided guidance on open licensing and submission requirements as well as an opportunity for attendees to ask specific questions related to their proposals.

- **Grant Completion Webinars** – multiple information sessions provided guidance for grantees on how to complete grant work, including detailed information on how to submit their OER resources and grant completion reports.

- **Improved Grant Report Template** – to assist grantees in meeting grant reporting requirements, the council clarified required data and accompanying instructions in the grant reporting template.

- **Improved Grant Report Submission Process** – Grantees were provided a web-based form to submit their grant completion reports. The form guides the grantees through each of the grant requirements. Several training documents have been created to support grantees in utilizing this streamlined approach.

- **GoOpen CT Repository** – To provide greater visibility for the completed grant work, the council partnered with the Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology to utilize the statewide GoOpen CT repository. Grantees are required to upload OER to the repository so that others across Connecticut can easily discover and use those same resources. A training guide on how to submit work to the repository has also been created.

Submissions & Awards

While faculty and their associated institutions were still dealing with the impact of COVID-19 and the transition to emergency remote learning during the Year 2 launch of the CT OER Grant Program, the council did see an increase in the number and quality of applications from the previous year.

The call for proposals was announced on January 11th, 2020, with an application deadline of February 15th, 2020. Recognizing the challenges faculty were facing with the transition to remote learning coupled with the start of the Spring semester, the council extended the application deadline to March 15th, 2020.

In total, 51 proposals were received (compared to 35 proposals in Year 1). 37 proposals were initially selected for a total of $61,750 (compared to 31 proposals selected for $43,800 in Year 1). Unfortunately, two awardees had to withdraw due to a section cancellation and a personal matter while a third awardee did not complete their proposed work resulting in a total of $58,750 being awarded across 34 proposals.

In Year 2, the council received proposals from 16 different institutions with 10 of those being first-time institutional applicants. Of the 34 awards, 32 proposals contained first-time individual applicants.

The table on the following page provides a summary of the grants awarded, receiving institutions, and which academic disciplines were covered.

In total, 51 proposals were received (compared to 35 proposals in Year 1). 37 proposals were initially selected for a total of $61,750 (compared to 31 proposals selected for $43,800 in Year 1)

$227,000

$58,750

State
Funding

Benefits to
Students
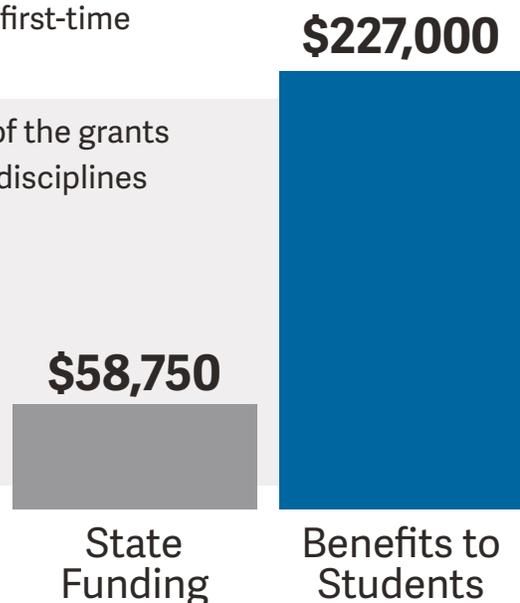
2021 CT OER Grant Program
Awards by Category

17 adoptions
6 impacts
5 supplementals
6 reviews

Receiving Institutions

Capital Community College
Charter Oak State College
Connecticut College
Gateway Community College
Goodwin College
Housatonic Community College
Manchester Community College
Naugatuck Valley Community College
Quinnipiac University
Sacred Heart University
Southern Connecticut State University
Three Rivers Community College
Tunxis Community College
University of Bridgeport
University of Connecticut
Western Connecticut State University

Disciplines

Art History
Arts
Biology
Business
Communications
Computer Electronics
Computer Science
Economics
Engineering
English
First Year Studies
Global Studies / History
Health Science
Human Development
Human Services
Mathematics
Psychology
Social Sciences
Social Work

34 Awards Accepted=$58,750

1,821

students in 105 course sections
avoided $227,000 in textbook costs

Results

Based on the reported data, 1,821 students across 105 different course sections have avoided over $227,000 in textbook costs which represents an estimated 3.9x return on the investment of $58,750. These savings will continue to be realized each semester that the courses are taught. Beyond savings, student performance and persistence had positive outcomes. On average, 94% of those students completed their coursework with 77% of those students receiving a letter grade of 'C' or better.

Students	Sections	Persistence	Performance	Avoidance	ROI
1,821	105	94%	77%	$227,064	3.9x

In addition to the positive impact OER adoption has had, two-thirds of the Review grantees have indicated that the evaluation of their selected OER will lead to full and/or partial adoption of those works. In two cases, reviewers stated adoption will be across all course sections with one reviewer estimating 1,5000 student per year will benefit and another projecting over $60,000 in savings annually. Supplemental grantees have curated and developed resources that not only aid their adoption of OER, but will also enable other faculty to adopt those primary and supplemental OER resources. The Impact grantees have reported on collaborative adoptions that spanned across departments as well as institutions.

Select Grant Highlights:

- Broad faculty collaboration across multiple First Year Studies sections

- High School Partnership Program spanning multiple high schools and continued usage beyond the grant period

- Faculty collaboration to create assessments in support of a highly adopted US History OER

- A major OER contribution to Asian Art

- Development of a fully online course template with assignments and assessments to support College Algebra

- Student contributions to the review of an OER

Cost Avoidance calculations are a combination of actual cost savings and projected cost avoidance as not all students purchase the legacy textbook or access the replacement OER. Additionally, some students may opt for other textbook options such as used, rental or digital delivery. Based on the data provided, the **average legacy textbook cost was $134.66** *per course per student.*

Insights

Grantees were required to collect qualitative data from the students enrolled in their OER courses as part of grant reporting requirements. The council provided sample questions, but did not mandate a single uniform student survey to allow faculty to use survey instruments that best fit their situations and needs. Due to the diverse data collection formats, it was not possible to compare the results of the student responses in a statistical form.

In addition to collecting student survey data, faculty shared their own insights and perspectives. Although the awarded grant projects reflect diverse institutions, academic disciplines, programs and student populations, the following noteworthy themes and insights emerged from the reported qualitative faculty and student data.'

"I found it very helpful especially during ... the pandemic, now that money is tighter than usual"

Student Perspectives

Avoiding Financial Barriers:

"Only using open educational resources for this course really benefitted me. The cost of attending college does not come easy to me, and with books and other supplemental materials on top of that, it is sometimes overwhelming. Using open educational materials was such a refreshing change of pace and I would definitely take another class with these in the future."

"I found it very helpful especially during this time in the pandemic, now that money is tighter than usual. I also found it more interesting being able to explore different websites & read different materials, instead of everything coming out of a book."

Quality of Materials:

"I personally loved the textbook! The writing style kept me engaged and interested in what I was reading, and I appreciated the pictures and their captions that the authors included throughout each chapter. I also really enjoyed the format it displayed in online, as the font was large and easy-to-read, and each page only had so much text on it, so it was easier to focus on than the history books I'm used to reading. Something about the online format just made it very immersive and enjoyable to read!"

"I loved the format of this course mainly because it helped us learn better, the primary sources that we based our journals about gave us another perspective from reading the

textbook. I believe this is how classes should be structured to give the students the right materials and resources to succeed."

Other Comments:

One student expressed appreciation that the course materials were delivered digitally, and that the student did not have to wait in "a long line at the bookstore" during a pandemic and put their health at risk.

Other students commented on the ease of access of OER course materials embedded within their online class.

Similarly, some students shared a preference for digital OER materials so that they do not have "carry around heavy textbooks" and "flip through endless pages" to find specific information.

Those students also commented on the convenience of accessing digital OER wherever and whenever their busy lives allow.

Faculty Perspectives

Many faculty reported improved student engagement:

"Students seemed more at ease, better prepared, and much more engaged with the variety of materials available via OER, and therefore more engaged with the class."

> *"I believe that this [OER] access contributed to the 100% retention and the high grades earned by the students"*

Some noted the increased equity from using OER:

"Overall, the rewards of using the OER far exceeded the challenges. It was especially gratifying to experience a level of equity in the class such that from the very first day, all students can easily access the resources. I believe that this access contributed to the 100% retention and the high grades earned by the students in the two sections of this class."

> *"Students seemed more at ease, better prepared, and much more engaged"*

Others commented on the quality and upkeep of OER:

"One benefit for faculty is that the OpenStax textbook is updated regularly and any errors in the book can be reported by anyone. Another benefit is that since the textbook is free and online, students can have immediate access to it without waiting for it to ship to their homes plus they do not have to pay a thing for the textbook."

Recognizing some effort is required, faculty noted the logistical benefits of OER:

> "The extra work put into the conversion to OER is compensated for by the logistical ease of the course throughout the semester. It's also easier to incorporate a wide variety of media into an OER syllabus wherein students just click on a link and they are anywhere in the world in a video, on a platform, in a book or chapter, in a governmental or non-governmental resource, etc."

Lastly, impact grants provided collaborative opportunities that resulted in personal growth:

> "We also divided our work into chapters we wanted to consider, and we worked in pairs on these chapters which allowed us to partner with different faculty members each time. Not only did this allow us time to share ideas, flesh out assignments, and develop thoughtful discussion board questions/ journals, but it also allowed us to get to know each other better, our teaching philosophies, and what we see as central to the teaching of freshman seminar. This was fruitful and rewarding."

Challenges

Student Challenges

Due to the ongoing pandemic, a number of course sections were offered in an online/remote format that relied on digital materials. While most students expressed a preference for digital materials, some students did prefer a paper-based textbook especially for annotation. Some expressed limited access to on-campus resources such as copy centers and bookstores that may have prevented obtaining print copies of OER. Lastly, some students expressed challenges adjusting to new OER platforms which presented some formatting and printing challenges as well as a change in workflow on how to submit assignments.

Faculty Challenges

While faculty clearly saw the benefit of OER, some challenges were reported. Faculty expressed that the discovery, adoption and/or creation of OER required a major time commitment. Some stated that the adopted OER didn't align perfectly to their learning objectives and needed some re-organization. Others referenced limited experience and training in using new OER platforms/providers such as Libretext, Lumen Learning Waymaker, and SmartHistory as well as the challenges of developing OER within a learning management system such as Blackboard.

Usability:

> "While students expressed some frustration with formatting issues accessing

the resource in Libretext, it's notable that most students still preferred a free OER resource to a traditional, costly survey text."

Training:

"If I was able to have a dialog both with the dissemination platform and with the content providers, I believe I could reduce my frustration with assembling and my students' frustration with using the OER by providing feedback on how the resources are functioning."

Grant Program Challenges

Within the 2020 CT OER Legislative Report, the council presented eight challenge areas: Awareness, COVID-19 / Competing Priorities, Grant Processes, Funding Calendar, Legislative Reporting Deadline, Repository, and Supporting Tools. The council is appreciative of the legislature for extending the reporting deadline and providing the opportunity to carry forward unused funds (HB 6405). Additionally, the council thanks the

Awareness of the CT OER Grant Program continues to be a major challenge for the council.

Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology for providing access to the **GoOpen CT** OER repository.

While some previous challenge areas have been addressed through legislative action, state partnerships, and council actions, there are some areas of concern that remain.

Awareness of the CT OER Grant Program continues to be a major challenge for the council. To date, most marketing of the grant program has come through direct email to Chief Executive Officers and Chief Academic Officers for Connecticut's institutions of higher education in the hopes that the opportunity would be circulated. Currently, there is no designated method to reach faculty directly. Additionally, there is no dedicated web presence for the council's efforts outside of an **OER page** on the Connecticut Office of Higher Education's website.

The council would like to explore OER textbook creation grants that would span across multiple years. These textbook creation grants would specifically target 'high impact' areas where no suitable OER currently exists.

Funding Cycle also continues to be a challenge area. The council extends its gratitude to the legislature for extending the funding calendar and allowing unexpended funds to be carried forward for one fiscal year. This modification provides greater alignment to the academic

calendar and the ability for faculty to complete grant work through the Fall semester. By starting the grant cycle earlier, the council hopes that Spring semester proposals may be presented and smaller OER creation may also be proposed. With the current funding cycle and reporting deadlines, large scale OER works such as textbooks cannot be completed. Those works generally take 2-3 years and may not produce tangible student savings until Year 3. The council, however, would like to explore OER textbook creation grants that would span across multiple years. These textbook creation grants would specifically target 'high impact' areas where no suitable OER currently exists.

Support for faculty efforts is another challenge area as not all institutions have robust support structures in place to assist faculty in the adoption and/or creation of OER.

Support for faculty efforts is another challenge area as not all institutions have robust support structures in place to assist faculty in the adoption and/or creation of OER. The council would like to not only promote the benefits of OER more widely, but also facilitate collaborative approaches to professional development and OER creation opportunities as well as provide greater guidance through the grant process, but lacks the administrative staffing and funding to grow these supports.

Support for the council is not only tied to the support of faculty, but reflective of the additional efforts the council has taken on since its inception (annual summit, statewide surveying, and overlapping grant cycles). As the grant program evolves and grows, greater staffing support is needed to manage administrative aspects such as dissemination, correspondence, and technical support.

The 2021 CT OER Summit attracted 175 attendees from 42 different institutions across 10 states.

2021 Virtual CT OER Summit

The 2021 CT OER Summit attracted 175 attendees from 42 different institutions across 10 states and the Netherlands. (California, Connecticut, Kansas, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.) Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the event was held virtually March 1st through March 4th, 2021 to correspond with Open Ed Week, the annual celebration of open education achievements and innovations. The virtual format appears to have allowed more attendees and greater national exposure to the OER work in Connecticut.

The event kicked-off with a spotlight on the work of the 2020 Grant Awardees and was

followed by a panel of students sharing their perspectives on the benefits of OER. Additional days featured sessions on:

- Accessibility & OER
- Discovery & Implementation of OER
- Student Advocacy for OER
- Open Pedagogy
- Collaborative Support Models for OER

Survey Results

20 attendees responded to the post-event survey and rated the event 8.6 out of 10 with an 8.3 out of 10 rating for improved knowledge.

> *Evaluating OER Accessibility and Creating Accessible OER - I am well-versed in accessibility but this was a "crystalizing" presentation that was great for all audiences. I can't wait to get the slides.* ***– 2021 CT OER Summit Attendee***

2021 Statewide OER Survey

2021 Legislation

The Connecticut General Assembly's 2021 bill **HB 6405** provided a much-needed extension for the council's annual report to the legislature (to accommodate end of semester reporting) as well as provided an opportunity to survey Connecticut's higher education institutions on their current OER usage and promotion efforts. Specifically, the bill called for the reporting of "(1) the number and percentage of high-impact courses for which open educational resources have been developed, (2) the degree to which institutions of higher education promote the use of and access to open educational resources".

Results

A 20-question survey was designed and delivered in partnership between the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities and the University of Connecticut. (Please see Appendix B for the survey request and question set.) The survey requests that institutions report not only on the OER awareness and promotion efforts that have been occurring, but also quantify the OER being used during the 2020-2021 academic year in "high impact" areas as defined by the 2019 statewide survey. These "high impact" subject areas have the highest reported enrollments and generally have higher cost textbooks associated.

The request for completion was issued by the Connecticut Office of Higher Education's Executive Director, Timothy Larson, and was distributed to all Connecticut Higher Education Chief Executive Officers and Chief Academic Officers on October 13, 2021. All responses were due by December 1, 2021.

Participating Institutions

Albert Magnus College
Capital Community College
Central Connecticut State University
Charter Oak State College
Connecticut College
Eastern Connecticut State University
Fairfield University
Gateway Community College
Goodwin University
Hartford Seminary
Housatonic Community College
Manchester Community College
Middlesex Community College
Mitchell College

Naugatuck Valley Community College
Northwestern Connecticut Community College
Paier College
Post University
Quinebaug Valley Community College
Rensselaer at Hartford
Three Rivers Community College
Trinity College
Tunxis Community College
University of Bridgeport
University of Hartford
University of New Haven
University of Saint Joseph
Western Connecticut State University

OER Usage & Data Collection

28 institutions (listed above) in total responded to the survey. Based on those respondents, 93% indicated that they have some reported OER adoption occurring at their institution. 71% of the respondents indicated that they had some form of organized OER initiative. The majority of those OER initiatives have been in place for three years or longer (56%) while some have been established within the last two years (15%). When asked whether the COVID-19 pandemic and the shift to emergency remote learning impacted OER adoption, 25% indicated that they saw an increased usage.

In response to questions about institutional data collection on OER usage and impact, many institutions noted a lack of set data standards and collection processes. Collection primarily consisted of retroactively self-reported and manually tabulated data from academic departments, and library and instructional design staffs. The few institutions with defined reporting structures tended to have grant programs (internal or external) that required some data standards and reporting. Only 18% of the respondents indicated that they were capturing OER usage and student savings. Even fewer (7%) indicated that they were tracking student success rates such as completion rates and GPA.

OER Utilization in High Impact Course Areas

Recognizing the data collection and reporting challenges institutions faced, the results for Questions 12 through 14 can be best presented as a conversative estimate of the OER being utilized within 'high impact' course areas statewide. Using the reported enrollment numbers for the identified OER course sections, the council projected student savings numbers utilizing the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) OER Savings Calculation Method to estimate student savings/avoidance. This method presents the average cost savings/avoidance for student usage of OER at $117 per course/section.

The tables below present summary data on the 'high impact' courses utilizing OER.

High Impact Areas by Discipline

Discipline	Subject	Total	OER	% OER	Enrollments	Savings
Business	Accounting	331	10	3%	220	$25,740
Business	Business	478	46	10%	735	$85,995
Business	Communications	557	117	21%	2050	$239,850
Business	Economics	286	10	3%	262	$30,654
Business	Management	342	26	8%	478	$55,926
Business	Marketing	182	9	5%	155	$18,135
Humanities	Art	625	84	13%	1280	$149,760
Humanities	Composition	781	162	21%	2640	$308,880
Humanities	History	427	54	13%	1185	$138,645
Humanities	Literature	279	44	16%	751	$87,867
Humanities	Writing	218	52	24%	836	$97,812
Math	Algebra	625	118	19%	2177	$254,709
Math	Calculus	202	27	13%	751	$87,867
Math	Stats	227	17	7%	283	$33,111
Orientation	First Year	410	83	20%	1297	$151,749
Science	Anatomy	277	6	2%	165	$19,305
Science	Biology	1039	72	7%	1393	$162,981
Science	Chemistry	648	34	5%	543	$63,531
Science	Psychology	846	36	4%	823	$96,291
Science	Sociology	343	54	16%	1258	$147,186
	AY 20-21 Totals	**9,123**	**1,061**	**12%**	**19,282**	**$2,255,994**

Based on the SPARC calculation method and the reported data, the survey presents that 19,282 students across 1,061 OER sections during the 2020-2021 academic year saved or avoided $2,225,994 in course materials fees.

Top 5 Subjects By Enrollment

Discipline	Subject	Enrollments	Savings
Humanities	Composition	2640	$308,880
Math	Algebra	2177	$254,709
Business	Communications	2050	$239,850
Science	Biology	1393	$162,981
Orientation	First Year	1297	$151,749

Top 5 Subjects By Adoption

Discipline	Subject	Total	OER	% OER
Humanities	Writing	218	52	24%
Business	Communications	557	117	21%
Humanities	Composition	781	162	21%
Orientation	First Year	410	83	20%
Math	Algebra	625	118	19%

Communications, First Year Seminar, Humanities, and Math represented the highest adopted and enrolled disciplines where OER was utilized. It appears that Business Communications and Biology may be outliers within their disciplines with regards to OER adoption.

Bottom 5 Subjects By Adoption

Discipline	Subject	Total	OER	% OER	Enrollments	Savings
Science	Anatomy	277	6	2%	165	$19,305
Business	Accounting	331	10	3%	220	$25,740
Business	Economics	286	10	3%	262	$30,654
Science	Psychology	846	36	4%	823	$96,291
Business	Marketing	182	9	5%	155	$18,135

Areas of Business and Science represented the lowest "High Impact" areas to implement OER. While Communications (Business) and Sociology (Sciences) generally rank high in OER adoption, Sciences such as Anatomy & Physiology and Psychology as well as Business courses such as Economics and Marketing did not realize the same success.

Top 10 Institutions by OER Enrollments

Institution	Total Sections	Total OER	OER Enrollments
Housatonic Community College	748	323	5,493
Goodwin University	96	96	1,604
Charter Oak State College	136	96	1,432
Gateway Community College	613	67	1,431
Manchester Community College	571	71	1,360
Tunxis Community College	818	68	1,252
Eastern Connecticut State University	49	45	1,126
Northwestern Connecticut Community College	192	61	1,122
Naugatuck Valley Community College	788	51	1,039
Capital Community College	271	35	890

The institutions listed above consistently reported the highest OER adoptions and enrollments across the identified "High Impact" areas. Of note, Housatonic Community College has a long-standing OER program that was spurred on by their involvement in the Achieving the Dream OER Degree Initiative in 2017.

OER Utilization in High Impact Course Areas

54% of the respondents indicated that their institution offered additional courses outside of the 'high impact' areas that utilized OER. For those 15 institutions, they reported an additional 4,497 students realized estimated savings of $526,149 (based on the SPARC calculation method). Institutions indicated that they offered courses for both lower and upper levels and

included subjects such as Arts (Graphic Design, Dance, Music, and Theater), Allied Health, Computer Sciences, Math (Pre-Calculus, Math for Liberal Arts), Manufacturing, Government/ Political Science, Hospitality, and Foreign Languages.

OER Awareness and Promotion Efforts

Based on the responses from the 28 institutions, much of the reported OER awareness and promotion efforts have been focused on faculty and administration. Faculty (68%), academic departments (50%), and department chairs (50%) represent the most targeted cluster. Library staff (61%) and Instructional Design staff (50%) are reported as high target areas, but these roles historically have supported, if not run, OER efforts on campuses and may be misidentified. The survey did not capture which role(s) currently promote and support institutional OER efforts.

For students, Student Government Associations (32%) were the primary groups targeted with only 11% indicating the Other Student Organizations/Clubs were contacted. 36% of the respondents did report that some outreach to the General Student Body was made.

Most non-academic staff (Enrollment Management – 7% and Student Support – 18%) are not included in awareness efforts. These departments encompass student support areas such as admissions, advising, financial aid, and tutoring. This may be a key area to focus on as these roles tend to advise and support students and their course selection.
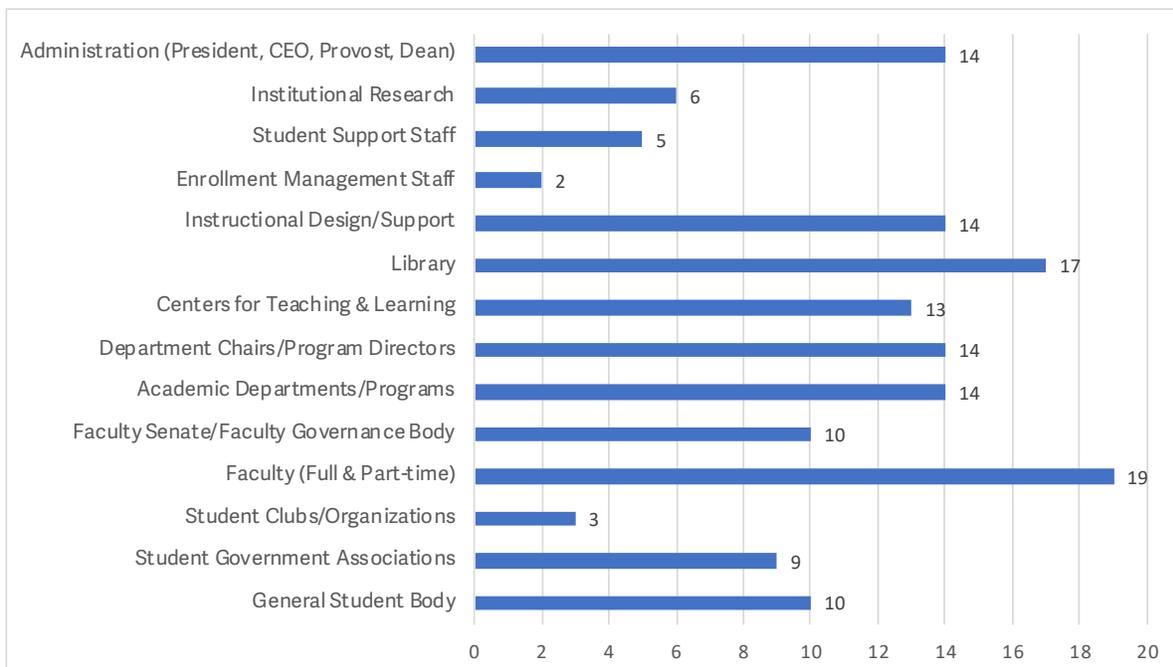
Awareness Audiences

Figure 1: Targeted audiences for OER Awareness & Promotion efforts with institutional effort frequency

Most OER framing efforts focus on Access (64%) and Affordability (68%) of course materials impacting Student Success (57%). Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts (46%) may be tied to equitable access to course materials as well as diverse representation depicted within the materials. An emerging area may be related to Student Engagement (32%) and Collaboration (25%) that may include Open Pedagogy efforts where students collaborate with faculty to revise, supplement, or create OER works.
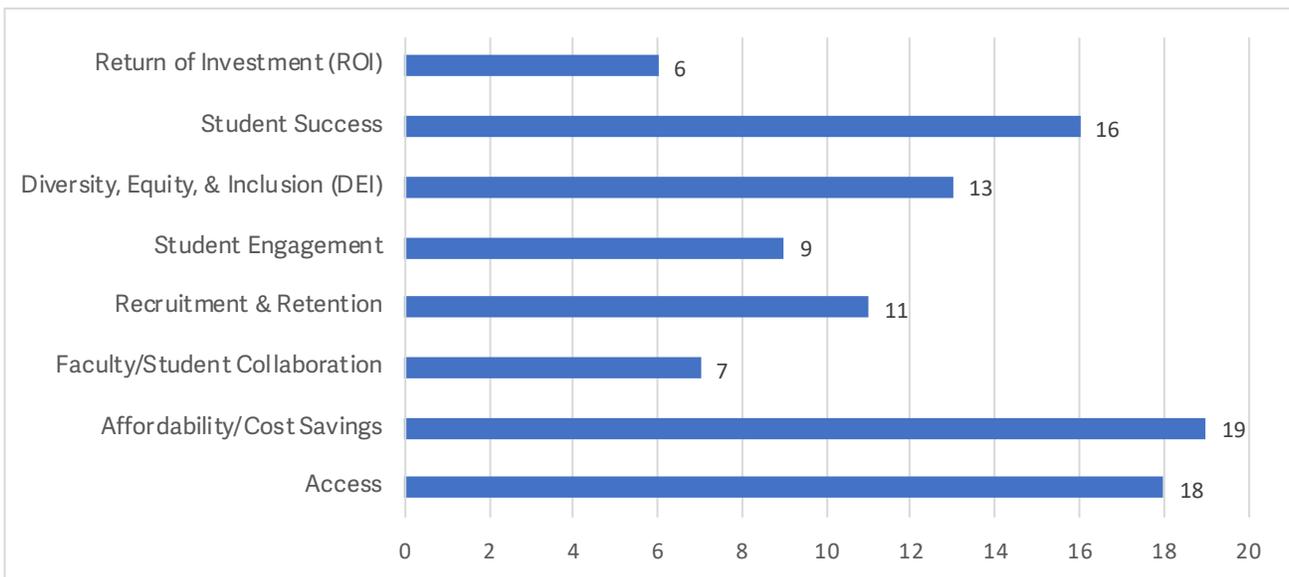
OER Framing

Figure 2: Framing for OER Awareness & Promotion efforts with institutional effort frequency

Respondents' Feedback

Respondents were asked to provide general commentary and feedback on the survey as well as their own OER efforts. Some commented on the difficulty of responding to the survey as formal data capture and reporting structures were not in place. Some institutions were aware of local OER efforts but were unsure how to capture the requested information.

A few comments were related to the stated definitions of Open Educational Resources and High Impact areas. Some called for clearer guidance on what is allowed as OER while others call for the inclusion of free resources which may not be openly licensed such as library resources. Others called for the High Impact areas to be expanded or include all General Education subject areas. In addition to broadened definitions, respondents also called for other open efforts and practices (such as Open Pedagogy) to be recognized within the survey tool.

With regards to local OER efforts, some institutions indicated that they were interested in

exploring and supporting OER but were unsure how to start. Others expressed concern regarding the sustainability of current OER efforts as they may depend on a single advocate. Overall, respondents were seeking greater assistance from the state to promote OER as a critical element of institutional strategic planning and academic priorities as well as provide the necessary support for institutions to launch OER efforts.

> *"The Coordinating Council's grant program has been a tremendous catalyst for OER adoption at [our institution], so we hope it will continue to be offered!"*
> *– 2021 Survey Respondent*

Insights

Overall, the statewide OER survey realized a solid response rate with over 50% (28) of the invited institutions responding. Most respondents (71%) have some organized OER efforts occurring with the majority (56%) of those efforts being three years or older.

Most of the responding institutions indicated that they do not have formal data collection and reporting processes established and are not actively capturing OER usage and student impact. For those who do capture information, it tends to be isolated to grant-related activities. The lack of formal data collection and reporting standards may impact not only future surveying but long-term reporting of the impact of grant funded work.

OER Awareness efforts, based on the respondents, tended to focus primarily on faculty (adoption) and administration (support). If students are targeted, it is generally through student government and not through direct communication with the larger student body. Most non-academic staff (such as admissions, advising, financial aid, etc.) are not included in awareness efforts.

Most OER framing efforts focused on access and affordability of course materials and the current cost barrier that impacts student success. An emerging area of discussion is related to student engagement and collaboration of creating OER as well as diversity and representation within the content positively impacting student success.

> *...the reported student impact realized over 19,000 students across 1,000+ sections estimated to have saved over $2.2 million in academic year 2020-2021 alone.*

While many institutional respondents commented on the challenges of collecting and reporting OER usage data (with most of the data retroactively self-reported and manually tabulated), the reported student impact realized over 19,000 students across 1,000+ sections estimated to have saved over $2.2 million in academic year 2020-2021 alone. The highest OER adoptions reported were for the following

subject areas: Composition/Writing, Algebra, Biology, Communications, and First Year Studies. Business & Science areas tended to have the lowest adoption rates (excluding Communications and Sociology). This may be an item for the council to explore in a future survey and identify what barriers are present (such as lack of awareness, lack of lab materials, lack of interactives/supplementals, time commitment to create those interactives) for those disciplines.

Challenges

Data Collection

Many institutional respondents commented on the challenges of collecting and reporting OER usage data as most of the data was retroactively self-reported and manually tabulated. Most institutions do not have formal processes in place to track OER usage. If formal tracking has been established, it has generally been tied to a grant effort and isolated to those involved. Additionally, existing platforms and services such as the campus bookstore do not provide accurate textbook adoption information and don't accommodate all OER listings. The multi-state OER collaborative DOERS3 recently issued a report detailing the **challenges of OER listing and fulfillment** within campus bookstores.

Definitions

In addition to the collection challenges, there was also some confusion on how Open Educational Resources and High Impact were defined. Some respondents noted the current legislative definition includes references to "free" as well as "cost lower than the market value" which caused some confusion. Others questioned whether print or platform costs supporting OER were allowed. Lastly, some questioned how to categorize courses that don't utilize textbooks and were designed to be affordable using free (library) resources, but not OER.

There was also some reported confusion related to the definition of "High Impact". Most comments were related to the identified 20 subject areas and how institutional course offerings fit within those categories. Others felt that the 20 areas did not represent their high impact areas and that some OER efforts and student savings were not included in their submissions. Lastly, some minor confusion was reported related to the definition's focus on student enrollment and textbook costs versus impact on the workforce.

Student Awareness

Institution respondents noted the lack of formalized processes and minimal student outreach related to OER promotion and data collection locally. Some community college respondents noted the use of a low-cost/no-cost (NOLO) course designator that provided a visual display

for students for which courses utilized course materials totaling $40 or less. This process also allowed for greater data collection and standardization as well as deeper analysis related to persistence and performance rates across multiple student demographics. This process did not, however, distinguish between OER and commercial course materials. Course designators are utilized in several states to denote courses with affordable materials options.

Budget & Expenses

The 2020-2021 biennial budget allocated an additional $100,000 to the Office of Higher Education to support the continuation of the statewide OER grant program and summit. The table below details the use of those funds.

Expense Category	Amount
Grant Awards	$58,750.00
Grant Management Software	$3,333.34
Closed Captioning Services	$401.00
Total Expenditures	$62,484.34
Amount Returned to the State	$37,515.66

Over $90,000 of the funding was held in reserve for grant awards. The remaining funds were projected for supporting products and services, including a platform to manage the grant cycle. In 2020, some funds were allocated for the expenses related to an in-person CT OER Summit held at Goodwin University. With the 2021 event being held virtually and web conferencing tools being provided by CSCU, the only event costs were related to providing closed captioning to the recorded sessions.

2022 CT OER Coordinating Council Actions

2022 CT OER Grant Program – Year 3

With an eye towards continuous improvement, the council has implemented further enhancements to Year 3 of the CT OER Grant Program. First, the council has altered the submission timeline for proposals to address common barriers for applicants: 1.) a condensed timeframe that overlapped with start of semester tasks for Spring courses and 2.) an application deadline that prevented Spring semester courses from being proposed. The 2022 CT OER Grant Program was officially announced on October 19th, 2021 and originally scheduled to close on January 3rd, 2022. This timeframe gave applicants nearly three months to propose works and was scheduled to close prior to the start of the Spring 2022 semester.

The 2022 CT OER Grant Program was officially announced on October 19th, 2021. This timeframe gave applicants nearly three months to propose works and was scheduled to close prior to the start of the Spring 2022 semester.

Secondly, the council expanded the criteria of the Impact grant category to include the development of stand-alone OER works. With an earlier application deadline (January 3rd, 2022) and notification timeline (January 14th, 2022), applicants could have the necessary time to complete the creation of a smaller scale original OER work. (Larger scale works such as full OER textbooks generally take longer than the funding window allows and would not be able to produce student impact data within the same year as the proposal was approved.)

Lastly, the council added a new review requirement to the Impact and Supplemental grant categories. To help ensure that the final submitted OER works are relevant to the discipline and are of high quality, grantees are required to seek out a colleague within the discipline to provide feedback using a review rubric provided by the council. (Please see Appendix C for the review rubric.)

To support the current grant cycle, the council again provided information sessions to interested applicants, provided updated grant guidance documentation, and made additional improvements to the grant application process including an enhanced method to list co-applicants.

In response to the reported increase of COVID cases within the state during the months of

December 2021 and January 2022, the council extended the grant deadline to February 18th, 2022, but began the review process of any applications submitted by the January 3rd, 2022 deadline by prioritizing Spring 2022 proposals.

In the coming months, the council will explore revising the grant compensation rates based on a landscape analysis of comparative grant programs. Currently, the funds awarded are subject to payroll deductions resulting in lower compensation for the increasing amount of work required.

Year 3 Summit Planning

The council is currently preparing for a 3rd CT OER Summit which will be held virtually from March 1st – 4th, 2022. The Summit will feature daily presentations focusing on 1.) Equity & OER 2.) Student Perspectives on Open Pedagogy 3.) Technologies & Platforms that support OER and inclusivity and 4.) a Spotlight on the 2021 OER Grantees.

The council is currently preparing for a 3rd CT OER Summit which will be held virtually from March 1st – 4th, 2022.

Year 3 Survey Planning

Once the 2022 CT OER Grant awardees have been announced and the 2022 CT OER Summit has been completed, the council will revisit the statewide OER survey and explore improvements and alternate/expanded parameters. The survey may explore how students are currently being made aware of affordability efforts within the course catalog and schedule. Additionally, some targeted questioning may explore why certain disciplines have lower OER adoption than others.

With the data standards and collection challenges documented in the 2021 Statewide OER Survey section, the council may need assistance in establishing statewide standards and collection methods as well as refining the current legislative definition of Open Educational Resources (OER).

Council Recommendations

Defining OER

Within the 2021 Statewide OER Survey, institutions shared that other affordability efforts are occurring on their campuses. Some have courses that were designed with affordability in mind from their inception and may not require textbooks at all. Other courses utilize 'free-to-student' resources such as library resources which bare an institutional cost. Both examples represent student cost savings measures, but may not explicitly identify as OER. Within the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities, there is an effort to designate and display which course sections utilize low-cost or no-cost materials. The colleges mark these courses as **"NOLO"** within the course schedule. In order for a course to be marked as "NOLO," the total cost of course materials must be $40 or below. These courses may utilize OER, but are not required to do so.

Also contained within the survey feedback was some expressed confusion regarding the legislative definition of OER:

> *"Open educational resource" means a college level resource made available on an Internet web site to be used by students, faculty and members of the public on an unlimited basis at a cost lower than the market value of the printed textbook or other educational resource, including full courses, course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming videos, tests, software and other similar teaching, learning and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under a creative commons attribution license that permits the free use and repurposing of such resources;*

The confusion stems from the language "at a cost lower than the market value" being combined with the phrase "permits the free use".

The council recognizes that some costs may be incurred by the student for either print versions of an OER text or technology fees to support the internet-delivery of digital OER materials, but the materials must be made freely available in some medium.

Recommendation #1: The council would like to propose the following OER definition from the federal **Affordable College Textbook Act (H.R.2107)** introduced during the 116th Congress (2019-2020).

> *"The term "open educational resource" means a teaching, learning, or research resource that is offered freely to users in at least one form and that either resides in the public domain or has been released under an open copyright license that allows for its free use, reuse, modification, and sharing with attribution."*

Data Standards & Collection

As reported earlier, many institutions found it challenging to respond to the Statewide OER Survey as most do not have established processes to capture and report out on OER usage. Additionally, some colleges that are collecting information on courses using low-cost or no-cost courses are not specifically capturing OER usage.

According to the SPARC State Policy Tracker, some states (California, Maryland, Oregon, Texas, Virginia, and Washington) have passed legislation that calls for common definitions, collection methods, and/or student display of courses that utilize OER. For example, Maryland's HB 318 (2020) calls for institutions "to develop a method to clearly and conspicuously show students in the online course catalog which courses use free digital materials and may provide access to certain low-cost print materials."

> **Recommendation #2:** The council would like to propose the exploration of state legislation that would establish price transparency measures that would establish common definitions, collection methods, and/or student display of course sections that utilize OER.

CT OER Grant Program Awareness

While the CT OER Grant Program realized an increase in applications and awards from 2020 to 2021, the council would like to see an overall increase in the number of applicants and a greater diversity of institutions and faculty represented. To date, most marketing of the grant program has come through direct email to Chief Executive Officers and Chief Academic Officers for Connecticut's institutions of higher education in the hopes that the opportunity would be circulated. Currently, there is no designated method to reach faculty directly. Additionally, there is no dedicated web presence for the council's efforts, outside of an OER page on the Connecticut Office of Higher Education's website. A designated web address and website could aid in not only promoting the grant opportunity but also providing answers to frequently asked questions. Interested faculty may also be able to subscribe for grant notifications and updates. This new site would also allow the council to recognize and celebrate past grant awardees.

> **Recommendation #3:** The council would like to propose the exploration of additional funding and support to establish a marketing and web presence for the CT OER Grant program to drive greater participation for the benefit of our students. Realizing nearly 4 times return on investment for each grant cycle, greater awareness and participation can only increase the number of students served and dollars saved.

Staffing Support

Over the past three years, the council has been able to develop and establish a statewide grant program and highly attended summit. In addition, the council designed and deployed a statewide survey this year. To accommodate the various needs of faculty, the council accelerated this year's grant cycle timeline causing overlapping work streams for the volunteer members. Council members concurrently supported 2021 awardees towards completion of their grant work while supporting interested applicants for the 2022 grant cycle. Additionally, council members were supporting the completion of the statewide survey and then its analysis for inclusion in the annual legislative report. The council split into two working groups to address the simultaneous review of 2021 grant reports and the review of 2022 grant proposals. All this work overlaps with the drafting of the annual report.

To better support current council efforts and provide an opportunity to expand, a dedicated resource with experience supporting open initiatives is needed. The council identified specific areas of support requested, including marketing and communications, grant support, survey management, event management, and report writing.

Recommendation #4: The council is proposing a half-time position, to be housed within the Connecticut Office of Higher Education, be dedicated to the support of the Connecticut Open Educational Resources Coordinating Council. This resource would allow for the expansion of support and scaling of grant opportunities to better support faculty and their institutions serve Connecticut students and improve affordability and persistence.

Summary

For the 2021 CT OER Grant Program, a reported 1,821 students across 105 different course sections avoided over $227,000 resulting in a 3.9x return on the state's investment. On average, 94% of those students completed their coursework with 77% of those students receiving a letter grade of 'C' or better. In addition to the 2021 grant program results, an additional 800+ students saved an estimated $94,000+ from 2020 grant-funded work that was carried forward to the Spring 2021, Summer 2021 and Fall 2021 semesters.

Across the first two years of the CT OER Grant program, over 3,800 students from Fall 2020 through Fall 2021 have benefited from the grant funded OER efforts across a minimum of 165 course sections resulting in over $492,000 in savings. We expect to see the continued year-over-year student savings by these one-time investments in OER.

> *Across the first two years of the CT OER Grant program, over 3,800 students from Fall 2020 through Fall 2021 have benefited from the grant funded OER efforts.*

In addition to the state funded OER adoptions, many colleges have begun at least preliminary OER initiatives. To measure current OER awareness and adoption efforts across Connecticut's institutions of higher education, the council designed and delivered the CT Open Educational Resources (OER) Awareness & High Impact Survey in Fall 2021. Institutions reported that 19,282 students across 1,000+ high impact course sections saved over $2.225 million in AY 2020-2021 alone. An additional 4,497 students realized estimated savings of $526,149 for non-high impact subjects. In total, 23,779 students saved $2,782,143 in one academic year.

> *Institutions reported that 19,282 students across 1,000+ high impact course sections saved over $2.225 million in AY 2020-2021 alone.*

Of the 28 institutional respondents, 10 institutions reported 1,000 OER enrollments or more for Academic Year 2020-2021. Those institutions were: Housatonic Community College (reported over 5,000 enrollments); Goodwin University; Charter Oak State College; Gateway Community College; Manchester Community College; Tunxis Community College; Eastern Connecticut State University; Northwestern Connecticut Community College; and Naugatuck Valley Community College.

With nearly $500,000 in student savings realized from the CT OER Grant Program (against a total expense of $111,000) and over $2.7 million in savings reported through the statewide

survey, there is growing support for OER within the state and a request for greater support. In order to achieve even greater results statewide and provide the requested guidance, the council is requesting supports in establishing 1.) common definitions and data collection standards 2.) a web and marketing presence for council initiatives and 3.) staffing support to help support and expand council initiatives.

By establishing common definitions and data collection standards, institutions will more readily be able to provide accurate and timely information on OER adoptions and student performance measures. Course designators not only provide the ability to track OER adoption by course section, but also provide greater visibility for students in need to identify courses that utilize no cost OER materials.

Establishing a web presence and connected marketing effort will build more awareness of the council's efforts resulting in greater participation in the annual CT OER Summit and CT OER Grant Program. Greater participation in the grant program will broaden the positive student impact that the grant program has had over its first two years.

Lastly, to support the expansion of council initiatives and provide the requested institutional support, the council will need a dedicated resource to provide support in marketing and communications, grant support, survey management, event management, and report writing efforts.

> *"Many students may drop out of classes when they see the price of the textbook required. Many might go through the course hoping no one will notice their lack of material due to lack of funds. I think more courses should use OER because it will ensure the learning of all students rather than only the ones who can afford it."*
>
> *"...we need to do everything we can to provide access to education for EVERYONE regardless of class or income or socioeconomic status."*
>
> **—Quotes from 2021 Grantee Students**

Thank You / Acknowledgements

The Connecticut OER Coordinating Council would like to extend its thanks and appreciation to the following individuals and organizations for their support of the council's efforts. The council would like to recognize the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities for their support as William Gammell, the Associate Vice President of Research & System Effectiveness, guided the question design of the Statewide OER Survey and Adam Wisnieski, Visual Communications Designer for CSCU Success, designed the 2021 CT OER Legislative Report. Additionally, the council would like to recognize the support from the University of Connecticut as Zach Claybaugh and Suzanne Cowan constructed and delivered the Statewide OER Survey. The council would also like to recognize the support of the Connecticut Office of Higher Education. Lastly, the council would like to recognize Western Connecticut State University for their support as Aura Lippincott managed the grant application platform.

Appendix A:
CT OER Coordinating Council Membership

Robin Avant
Dean of Academic Affairs
Housatonic Community College

Zach Claybaugh
Student Success Librarian
University of Connecticut

Kevin Corcoran (*Chair*)
Associate Vice President, Digital Learning
Connecticut State Colleges & Universities

David Ferreira
Provost
Charter Oak State College

Andre Freeman
Professor, Mathematics
Charter Oak State College

Elizabeth Johnson
Provost
Post University

Aura Lippincott
Instructional Design
Western Connecticut State University

Ariela McCaffrey
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Instruction & Outreach
Connecticut College

Kristi Newgarden
Instructional Design
Charter Oak State College

Eileen Rhodes
Director, Library Services
Connecticut State Community College

Manohar Singh
Dean of the School of Graduate and
Professional Studies
Southern Connecticut State University

Lauren Slingluff
Associate Dean for UConn Library
University of Connecticut

Brian Sommers
Professor, Geography
Central Connecticut State University

Sasha Teplyaev
Professor, Mathematics
University of Connecticut

Maya Vanderberg
Student Representative
Eastern Connecticut State University

Paula Dowd
Dean of Nursing and Health Professions
Goodwin University

Bob Wyckoff
Professor, English
Housatonic Community College

The council would like to thank the following individuals for their past service to the council: Shirley Adams, Charter Oak State College; Kate Fuller, University of Connecticut; Sharale Mathis, Middlesex Community College; and Danielle Wilken, Goodwin University.

Appendix B: Statewide Survey
CT Open Educational Resources (OER) Awareness & High Impact Survey

Introduction

The **Connecticut Open Educational Resource Coordinating Council** (CT OER Council) was established in 2019 by state legislation. Among the primary functions of the council are: 1.) the identifcation of high-impact courses that have or will adopt OER resources and 2.) track OER strategies at higher education institutions across the state.

In order to fulfill these functions, CT OER Council in conjunction with the CT Office of Higher Education (OHE) is requesting that each CT higher education institution complete the following request for information by December 1, 2021 so that the information can be included in a legislative report due Feb 1, 2022.

Based on 2019 survey, institutions identified 20 subject areas as high impact – having the highest enrollment and highest associated textbook costs. These 20 subject areas are listed for Questions 12-14 below.

To meet our charge, we hope to learn how many high impact courses and sections you have at your institution, the percentage of those course sections that utilize Open Educational Resources, and what the student cost savings/avoidance calculations are. We further hope to learn what institutional efforts are underway to promote and support OER adoption and/or creation.

Survey Definitions

- **Open Educational Resources:** Creative Commons **defines OER** as teaching, learning, and research materials that are either (a) in the public domain or (b) licensed in a manner that provides everyone with free and perpetual permission to engage in the **5R activities**–retaining, remixing, revising, reusing and redistributing the resources.

- **No-Cost or Low-Cost Materials (NoLo):** NoLo designations for course sections are used by several colleges in Connecticut. Sections marked as "NoLo" contain instructional materials that are no cost or low cost, and do not exceed $40. However, NoLo is not synonymous with OER and should not be reported as such, unless the entirety of materials used in a course section has an open license that permits free revision and redistribution. NoLo materials may include copyright-protected commercial/publisher materials as well as copyright-protected library resources.

Directions

The CT OER Council recommends that institutions assign responsibility for responding to the survey to groups comprised of individuals with the specific knowledge needed to answer specific questions. This might include individuals working in institutional research, OER-related positions, the library, administrators, and faculty teaching high-impact courses.

For enrollment and OER adoption data, we are seeking information for the 2020-2021 academic year (AY 20-21). For OER awareness information, we are seeking information on any efforts made over the past 5 years.

Please submit responses to this survey by December 1, 2021.

Privacy Statement

The results of this survey will be made public as part of a February 2022 council report to the Connecticut General Assembly's Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. The information may be presented in an aggregated form as well as institutional summary format.

Survey

Respondent Information:

Question 1: Select your institution from the drop-down list of institutions of higher education in the state of Connecticut

Question 2: Enter your institution's reported iPEDS Fall 2020 Undergraduate Enrollment

Question 3: Enter the name of the key contact for this survey.

(please enter using the format: last name, first name)

Question 4: Title/Role of key contact at responding institution.

Question 5: Email address of key contact at responding institution.

OER Background Information

Question 6: To your knowledge, is anyone utilizing OER at your institution?

Question 7: Has your institution implemented a program that supports OER adoption and/or creation?

Question 8: When did your institution first establish your OER program?

- Less than 1 year ago
- 1 to 2 years ago
- 3 to 5 years ago
- Over 5 years ago

Question 9: Did the COVID-19 pandemic raise the priority of your OER initiative?

- Yes
- Not currently
- Don't know

Question 10: At your institution, are data being collected to track the impact of OER use in the following categories?

A. Student Cost Avoidance/Savings:

- Yes
- Not Currently
- Don't Know

B. Student Success Rates (Completion, GPA, and/or Retention):

- Yes
- Not Currently
- Don't Know

Question 11: Add any relevant comments related to data being collected to track the impact of OER use at your institution

High Impact Coursework

Note: Course is defined as a unit of instruction in one area of study. Section is defined as a specific instance of a course. For example, the course Psychology 101 (PSY101) may have multiple sections taught by different faculty and may be offered in different modalities. High Impact Course Categories may contain similar course titles, such as Biology 1 and Biology 2. If your course titles qualify as high impact, please include those associated course titles and their associated section and enrollment counts.

The council will be utilizing the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC) **OER Savings Calculation Method** to estimate student savings/ avoidance. This method presents the average cost savings/avoidance for student usage of OER at $117 per course/section.

High Impact Course categories are numbered 1-20 on the left-hand side of the table below.

High Impact Course Categories	Q12: How many sections in the High Impact Course category were offered in AY20-21?	Q13: Estimate how many sections of these high impact courses utilized OER in AY 20-21 (Please do not include NOLO-designated sections if any commercial materials were used).	Q14: Total student enrollment for sections counted in previous question.
1. Biology 2. Algebra 3. Psychology 4. Composition 5. Writing 6. Economics 7. Chemistry 8. History 9. Statistics 10. Sociology 11. Anatomy 12. Business 13. Calculus 14. Art 15. Accounting 16. Management 17. Literature 18. Communication 19. Marketing 20. First-Year Seminar/ College Success			

Other OER Courses

Question 15: Did your institution offer any other courses using OER during the 2020-2021 academic year that fall outside of the statewide high impact subject areas?

The following two questions ("a" and "b") continue from Question 15 and ask for more detail about any courses you offered that fell outside of the high-impact subject areas.

A. To the best of your ability, please estimate how many students were enrolled in OER courses during the 2020-2021 academic year that fall outside of the statewide high impact subject areas.

B. Please feel free to add any relevant comments related to OER courses on your campus during the 2020-2021 academic year that fell outside of the statewide high impact subject areas.

Awareness & Promotion of OER

Question 16: For any awareness and/or promotion efforts related to OER performed in the past 5 years, please select all audiences that were targeted:

a. General Student Body
b. Student Government Associations
c. Student Clubs / Organizations
d. Faculty (Full & Part Time)
e. Faculty Senate/Faculty Governance Body
f. Academic Departments / Programs
g. Department Chairs / Program Directors
h. Centers for Teaching & Learning
i. Library
j. Instructional Design / Support
k. Enrollment Management Staff
l. Student Support Staff
m. Institutional Research
n. Administration (President, CEO, Provost, Dean)

Question 17. If your institution targeted any other groups in your OER awareness and/or promotion efforts, please list the group(s) here:

Question 18: How have you framed your OER awareness and promotion efforts for your intended audiences? Please select all that apply.

a. Access	
b. Affordability / Cost Savings	
c. Faculty/Student Collaboration	
d. Recruitment & Retention	
e. Student Engagement	
f. Equity & inclusion	
g. DEI	
h. Student Success	
i. Return on Investment (ROI)	

Question 19: If your institution framed your OER awareness and/or promotion efforts in other ways, please list the way(s) here:

Other Comments / Information

Question 20: If you have any other information for the CT OER Coordinating Council that would benefit the legislative report, please share it here:

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Appendix C: Review Rubric
CT OER Grant Program – Colleague Review Rubric

CT OER Grant Program – Colleague Review Rubric

Reviewer Information	Grantee Information
Name: Institution: Role: Email:	Name: Institution: Email:

Works Reviewed
Describe the grantee's work(s) reviewed:

Do You Support the Public Release of Current Version? Yes: ☐ No: ☐
Please Explain:

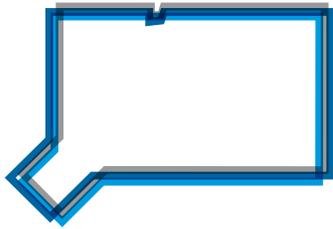| Criterion	Low: Extensive Revisions Needed	Medium: Minor Revisions Needed	High: Meets Expectations		Comments
	0-1	2	3	Score	
Content Accuracy Is the content factually correct?	Extensive factual errors and/or omissions.	Few factual errors and/or omissions.	The work does not display factual errors and/or omissions.		
	0-1	2	3		

Criterion	Low: Extensive Revisions Needed	Medium: Minor Revisions Needed	High: Meets Expectations		Comments
Clarity & Structure Are translations and/or quotations correct? Is the content well written? Is the content and/or the progression of the material sound in its presentation?	Significant errors in translations and/or quotations. Lacks clarity in its resentation and may include many errors in writing mechanics.	Few errors in quotations and/or translations. Content displays some errors in writing mechanics. Minor issues of clarity of content and/or progression of material are present.	Content is free of errors in quoting content and/or in translations present. Material is clear and presents learners with a logical progression through the content. Writing exhibits no mechanical errors.		
	0-1	2	3		
Comprehensiveness & Relevancy Is the language/content audience appropriate? Are sources used relevant? Does the work address the topic it sets out to address?	Submission is missing a significant number of relevant sources, which greatly impacts the efficacy of the resource(s) as an appropriate learning tool. The language and/or content of the resource is misaligned or not appropriate for the intended learner community.	Submission lacks a small number of relevant sources central to the discipline/topic under review. Submission may have instances of content and/or language presented that is not appropriate for the intended audience.	Submission utilizes and presents relevant sources central to the discipline/topic under review. Language and/or content is appropriate for the intended audience.		

Criterion	Low: Extensive Revisions Needed	Medium: Minor Revisions Needed	High: Meets Expectations		Comments
	0-1	2	3		
Ease of Use and Accessibility/universal design Is the work's presentation clear, consistent, navigable, and accessible?	Content is not easily navigable, nor is it presented in a clear and accessible format.	Some issues of accessibility are present. Content may not be consistent in ease of navigability and clarity of presentation.	Content is intuitively presented and easily navigable. Material is accessible to individuals with a variety of learning differences.		
			Total Score	/12	

Common Accessibility Checks
• Is alt text provided for images, graphs, and charts?   • Are various methods used for denoting difference, emphasis, and content meaning beyond color?   • Are headings used for content organization?   • Do colors have a strong enough contrast to offer clear readability to the user?   • Are bulleted or numbered list styles used for list structures?

Summary	
Please summarize the strengths and weaknesses of the work.	
How would students benefit from this project?	
How does the proposed output compare to the existing OER options? Does this work fill in a gap in the existing OER offerings in this discipline?	

Reviewer Signature	
Date:	

CT OER Coordinating Council
2021 Legislative Report