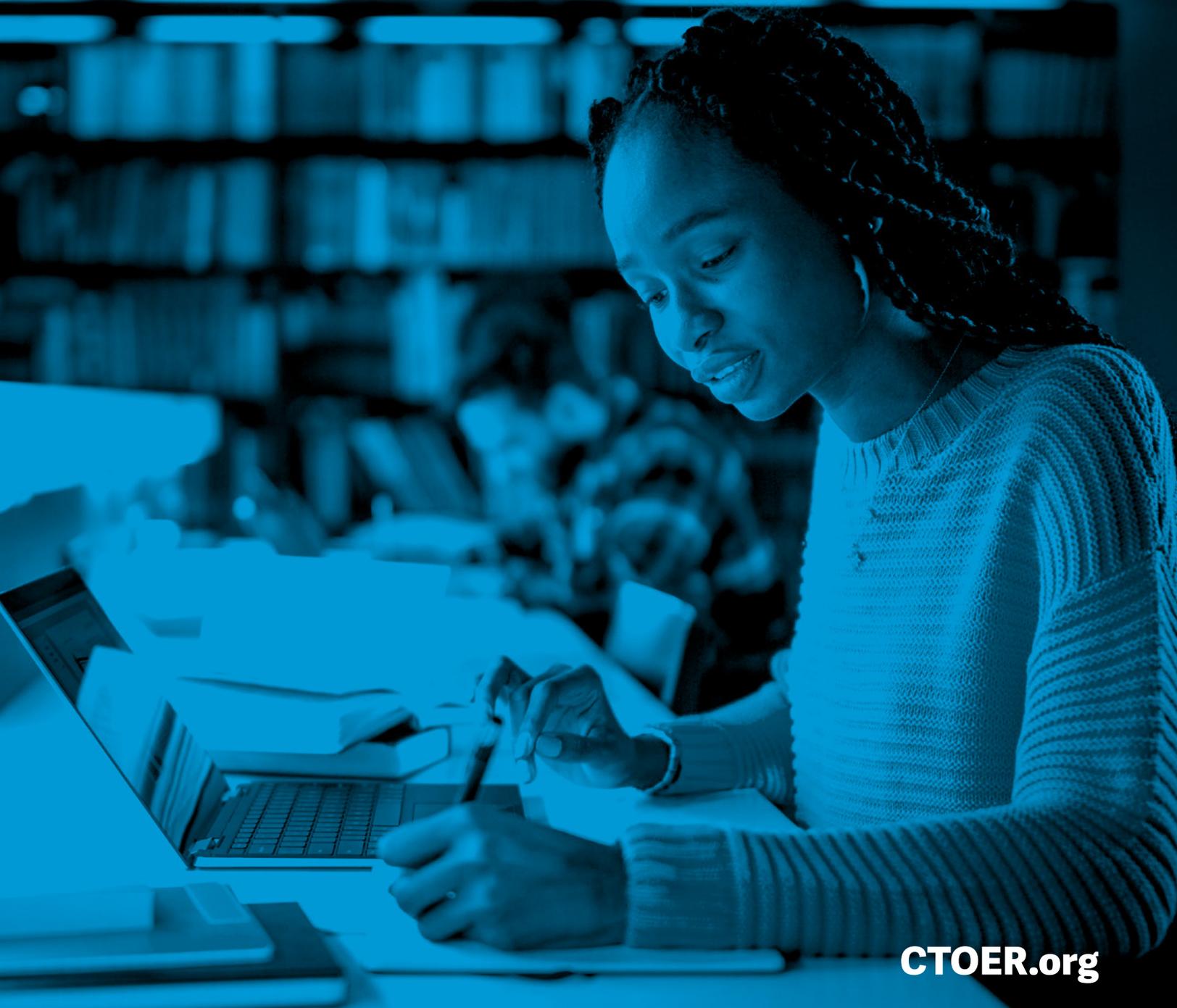


# Connecticut Open Educational Resources Coordinating Council 2023 Legislative Report

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JANUARY 31, 2024



# Grant Program Impact

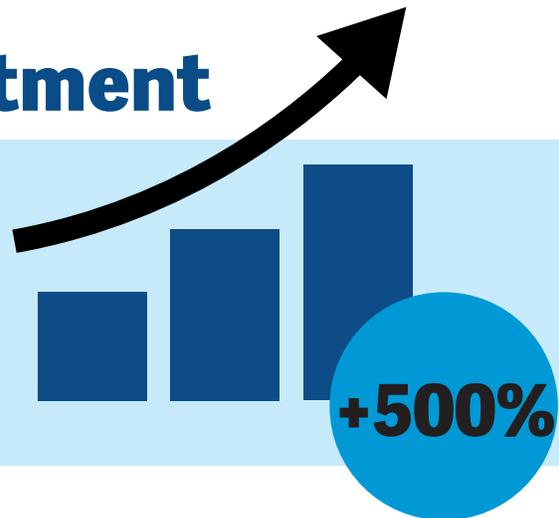


**= \$5.14**  
in benefits to students

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

## 5x Return on Investment

Cumulatively since 2020, the state's **\$217,363** investment helped **nearly 10,000** CT students avoid more than **\$1,177,000** in text book costs.



## Statewide Impact

**111 awards — \$217,363**

**9,699 students**

**151 faculty**

**28 institutions**

**362 course sections**

### *Did you know?*

**The Connecticut State Police will achieve a near-term savings of approximately \$50,000**

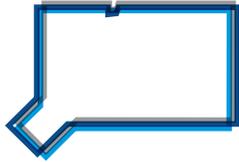


by using OER materials created through the state OER grant program. The State Police is using OER materials focused on anti-racism and implicit bias to train current and future officers.



**“I was able to use the  
money I didn't spend on  
the textbook for food.”**

—Connecticut Student



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# Executive Summary

Open Educational Resources (OER) are freely available online teaching and learning materials that can be used, shared, and adapted by faculty in Connecticut’s institutions of higher education. As an alternative to traditional textbooks, OER save students money, advance equity, facilitate academic freedom, and support models of learning that empower students as co-creators of knowledge. In this document, the Connecticut OER Coordinating Council provides the General Assembly with a 2023 annual report detailing the Council’s work and impacts and the status of OER in the state’s institutions of higher education.

## OER Grant Program

Made possible through \$100,000 in annual state funding.



NEARLY  
**10,000**  
STUDENTS

**\$1,177,000**  
SAVINGS

A central topic of this report is the Council’s OER Grant Program, which has been made possible through \$100,000 in annual state funding. Since 2020, the program has helped nearly ten thousand Connecticut students avoid more than \$1,177,000 in textbook costs. This is a cumulative return of over 5x for the state’s investment.

The state eliminated all FY2024 and FY2025 funding for the grant program. The Council urges the state to consider a full restoration of funding.

	FY 2024	FY 2025
<p>support scholarships to over 1,000 additional students.</p> <p><b>Reallocations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Reallocate Funding for Open Educational Resource Council</b>                      The Open Educational Resource Council is responsible for promoting the use of open educational resources and administering a competitive grant program within available appropriations. Funding is appropriated to Other Expenses in the Office of Higher Education, and is annually transferred to Central CT State University for administration. Funding is reallocated to Connecticut State Colleges and Universities to directly support the initiative.                 </li> </ul>	-100,000	-100,000
<p><b>Initiatives Funded from Federal Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds</b></p>		

# OER: Saving Money, Empowering Success, and Advancing Equity

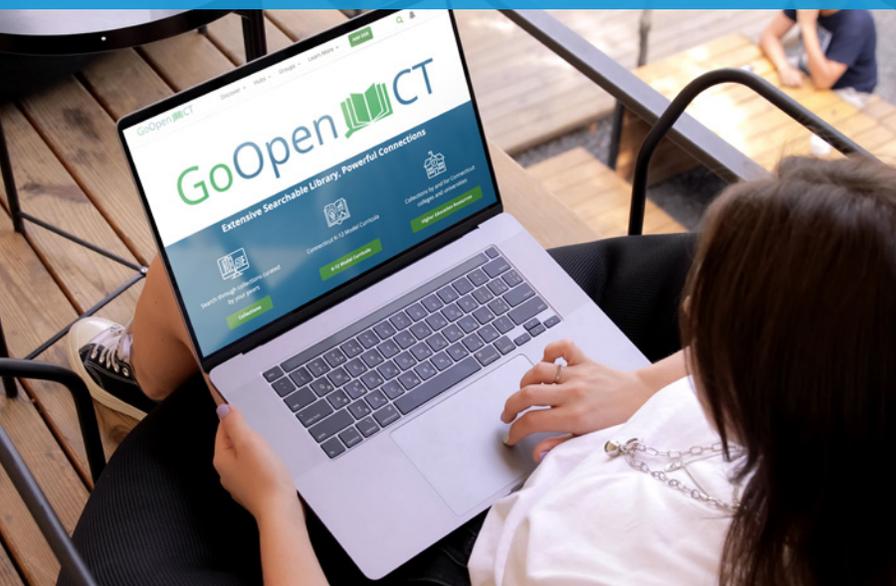
Whether in print format or delivered online for a fee, conventional textbooks present formidable barriers to Connecticut’s students. Leveraging the power of open collaboration and without compromising quality, OER present an innovative and cost effective way for the state to empower its institutions of higher education to address these barriers.

The nature of OER vary. They might resemble a traditional textbook and/or they might include learning

modules, “streaming videos, tests, software, and any other tools, materials, or techniques used to support access to knowledge.” The unifying feature is that these freely available materials either “reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and repurposing by others.”<sup>1</sup> This combination of characteristics continues to fuel OERs’ growing popularity. Indeed, today nearly one third of higher education faculty in the United States require at least one OER in their course.<sup>2</sup>

One reason for the popularity of OER is that they save students money. The costs of textbooks increased by 7% over the past three years so that, according to one study, a student today is expected to pay \$1,215 for textbooks and supplies during their first year of college.<sup>3</sup> Another

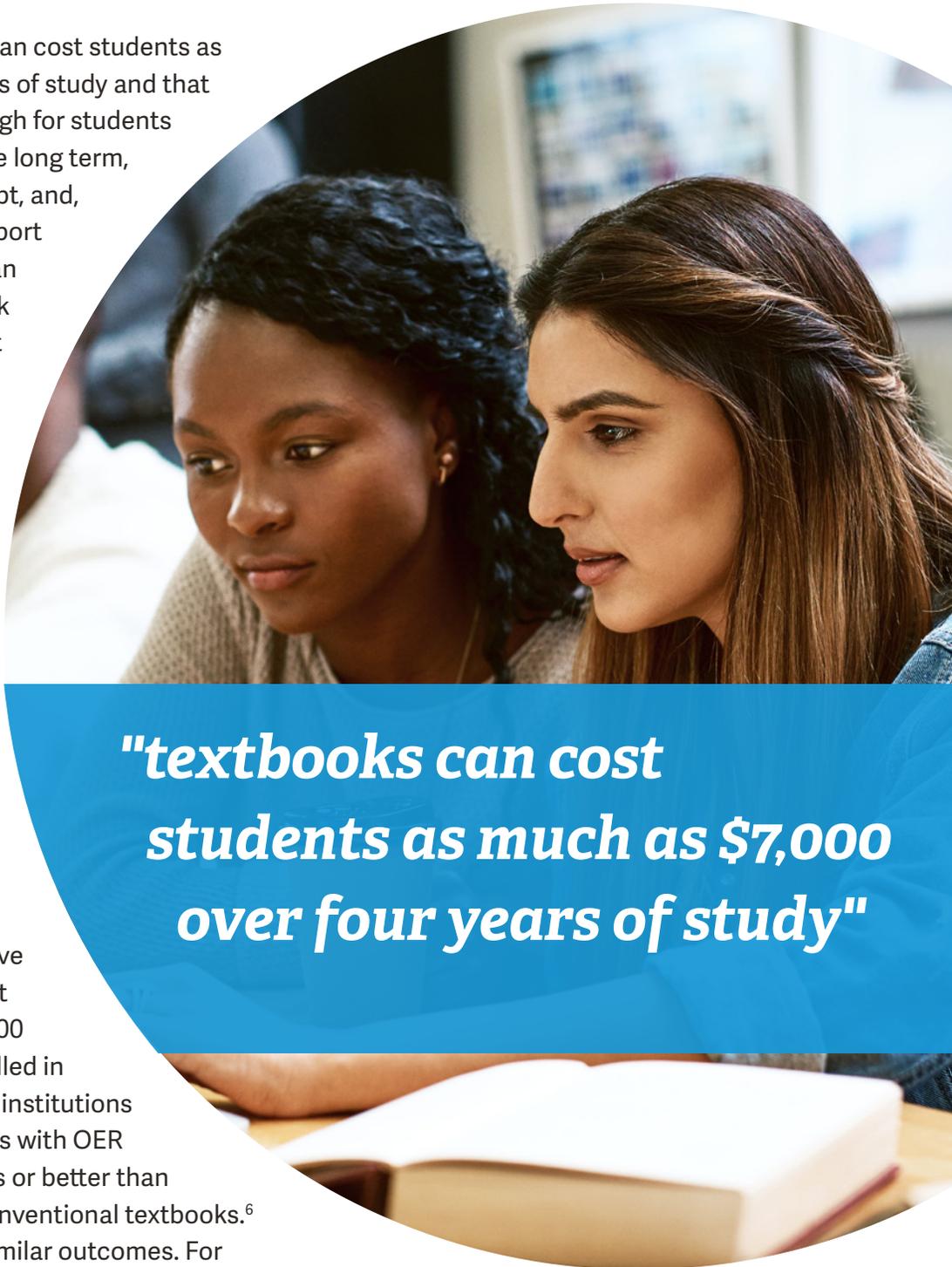
*The costs of textbooks can force students to skip meals, work extra hours, or simply attempt to pass their courses without the textbooks*



1 SPARC (2017). *OER Mythbusting*. Washington, DC: [SPARC.sparcopen.org/](https://sparc.sparcopen.org/)  
 2 Seaman, J. E., Seaman, J. (2023). *Digitally Established: Educational Resources in U.S. Higher Education, 2023*. Bay View Analytics. <https://www.bayviewanalytics.com/oer.html>  
 3 Welding, L. (2023). *Average cost of college textbooks: Full statistics*. Best Colleges. <https://www.bestcolleges.com/research/>

article found that textbooks can cost students as much as \$7,000 over four years of study and that these costs are particularly high for students taking science courses.<sup>4</sup> In the long term, this saddles students with debt, and, in the short term, students report that the costs of textbooks can force them to skip meals, work extra hours, or simply attempt to pass their courses without the textbooks.<sup>5</sup> Because they are high-quality and freely accessible from the first day of a course and (in contrast to e-textbook rental programs) in perpetuity afterwards, OER represents a major win for students and their wallets. In our state, for example, the Connecticut OER Grant Program has saved students \$1,177,000 in textbook costs from 2020 to 2023.

At the same time that they save money, OER advances student success. A study of nearly 5,000 undergraduate students enrolled in fifteen courses across ten US institutions found that students in courses with OER generally performed as well as or better than their peers in courses with conventional textbooks.<sup>6</sup> Connecticut data suggests similar outcomes. For



***"textbooks can cost students as much as \$7,000 over four years of study"***

4 Krueger, S.G. and Ward, L. (2020). Assessing textbook costs at a small college. *Virginia Libraries*, 64(1), p.4. DOI: <http://doi.org/>

5 Hanson, M. (2023). Average cost of college textbooks. Education Data Initiative. <https://educationdata.org/>

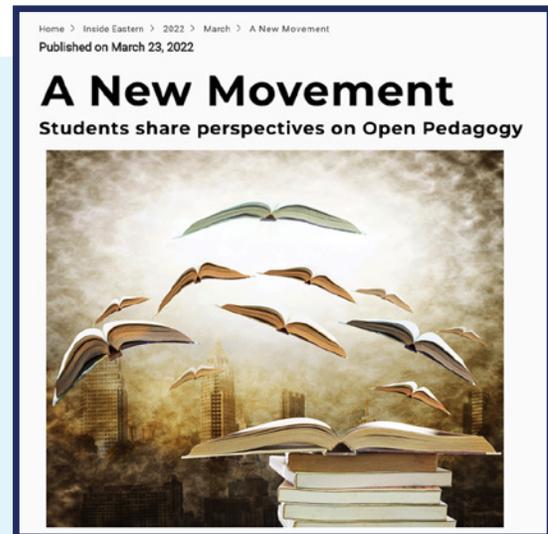
6 Fischer, L., Hilton, J., Robinson, T.J. *et al.* (2015). A multi-institutional study of the impact of open textbook adoption on the learning outcomes of post-secondary students. *J Comput High Educ* 27, 159–172. <https://doi.org/>

example, data from the Council’s 2023 OER Grant Program shows roughly 92% of students successfully completed their coursework.

Another reason why OER benefits Connecticut’s students is rooted in the power of Open. As an open-source alternative to conventional textbooks, OER gives Connecticut faculty the academic freedom to craft precisely the learning materials that will meet the specific needs of their unique students, geographic and cultural context, and learning objectives. This increased freedom also facilitates an innovative teaching practice called open pedagogy. Through open pedagogy, instructors engage students in experiential learning that empowers them as co-creators of educational materials and not simply as consumers of pre-written texts. At Eastern Connecticut State University, for example, Assistant Professor Nicolas Simon uses OER and open pedagogy practices to more deeply engage sociology students.<sup>7</sup> His students have created quizzes, developed PowerPoint presentations, formulated discussion questions, and curated relevant YouTube videos to explore sociological concepts and theories.

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<sup>7</sup> Bachman, D.(2022). A new movement: Students share perspectives on open pedagogy. Eastern Connecticut State University. <https://www.easternct.edu/news/>



***At Eastern Connecticut State University, for example, Assistant Professor Nicolas Simon uses OER and open pedagogy practices to more deeply engage sociology students. His students have created quizzes, developed PowerPoint presentations, formulated discussion questions, and curated relevant YouTube videos to explore sociological concepts and theories.***





## Empowering Success→

Evidence shows that OER leads to positive student outcomes including improved critical thinking skills, problem-solving, and teamwork, greater self-direction, and increased enjoyment of learning.<sup>8</sup> Open pedagogy reflects a commitment to student engagement, agency, and empowerment, paving the way for a more enriching and effective learning environment.



## Saving Money→

By lowering costs and facilitating open pedagogy, OER also advances equity in Connecticut. For students from underprivileged backgrounds, tuition costs combined with day-to-day living expenses can render their educational aspirations unreachable without savings opportunities such as OER.



## Advancing Equity→

Students from underserved communities can be made to feel marginalized by the exclusion of their voices and communities from curricula. Because of the opportunity that OER provides for open pedagogy, a diversity of students gain inroads to remix learning content to reflect their lives and cultures.



## Improving Access→

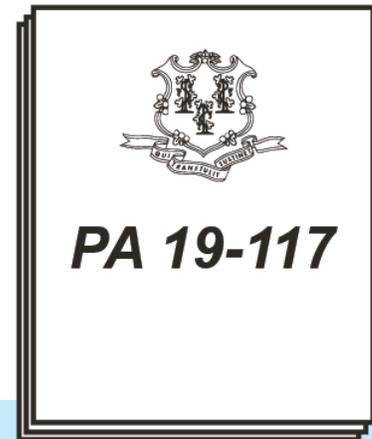
OER helps ensure that students are not left behind due to accessibility-related barriers. Through the adaptability of their text, media, tables, and weblinks, OER helps educators accommodate students and their diverse learning needs and interests.

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<sup>8</sup> Werth, E., Williams, K. (2022). The why of open pedagogy. Smart Learn. Environ. 9, 10. <https://doi.org/>

# Connecticut OER Coordinating Council

The [Connecticut OER Coordinating Council](#) was established in 2019 as a result of [Public Act Number 19-117](#). The Council’s charge entails identifying high-impact courses for which OER will be developed, converted, or adopted; establishing and administering a competitive OER Grant Program; and promoting strategies for the production, use, and access of OER. The Council’s membership includes faculty, staff, administrators, and students from the CSCU System, the University of Connecticut, and Connecticut’s independent institutions. See [page 38](#) for the Council’s current membership.



## **The General Assembly’s 2023 Legislative Session resulted in important changes for the Council:**

- Shifted administrative oversight of the Council from the Connecticut Office of Higher Education to the CSCU System
- Directed the Council to develop a model policy for adoption by institutions of higher education
- Eliminated of all FY2024 and FY2025 state funding for Council activities

## **Key ongoing activities of the Council include:**

- Administration of the state’s OER Grant Program ([see page 11](#))
- Organization of an annual Summit ([see page 20](#))
- Administration of a statewide survey ([see page 21](#))
- Formed a working group to plan for the development of the model policy and expects to draft this policy by its 2024 Legislative Report

Previously, the state had funded the Council in the amount of \$100,000 annually, an investment that provided a return of 500% in student savings.

**In order for the Council to continue to support equity, student success, academic freedom, and the ability of Connecticut faculty to engage in open pedagogy, we urge the state to fully restore funding.**

# Grant Program

In the OER Grant Program’s 2023 cycle, the Council received 48 proposals. The Council projects that it will ultimately award \$57,448 in funding to 19 of those proposals from 12 institutions (see Table 1).<sup>9</sup> Table 2 lists the subject areas that were supported through the grant funds.



## 2023 Grant Program

Enabled **1,332** students across **56** different course sections to avoid **\$96,994** in textbook costs

Receiving Institutions
Central Connecticut State University
Connecticut College
CT State Community College Capital
CT State Community College Housatonic
CT State Community College Middlesex
CT State Community College Naugatuck Valley
CT State Community College Three Rivers
Eastern Connecticut State University
Goodwin University
Quinnipiac University
Sacred Heart University
Western Connecticut State University

Figure 1

Subjects
Art
Biology
Business
Criminal Justice
Economics
Education
Engineering
First Year Studies
Gender & Sexuality Studies
Health Sciences
Philosophy
Social Work
Sociology

Figure 2

<sup>9</sup> In July 2023, Connecticut’s twelve community colleges consolidated into one singly accredited institution: CT State Community College. Because grants were awarded prior to the consolidation, this report identifies community college grantees by the names of their legacy institutions.

Based on data reported by the grantees, the Grant Program’s 2023 cycle has enabled 1,332 students across 56 different course sections to avoid \$96,994 in textbook costs. These savings will continue to

***These savings will continue to be realized each semester that the course sections are taught using OER***

be realized each semester that the course sections are taught using OER. Additionally, there will be savings for future students due to the fact that one grantee reported that, as a result of their grant activities, seven fellow faculty have pledged to adopt OER in their courses. As indicated in Table 3, the savings were accompanied by positive outcomes

regarding student performance and persistence. On average, 92% of students completed their coursework, and 89% of the students received a grade of “C” or better.

Students	Sections	Persistence	Performance	Avoidance	ROI
2,583	136	94%	86%	\$325,814	5.5x

**Figure 3**

**Dr. William Lugo**, OER grant recipient and Professor of Sociology and Criminology at Eastern Connecticut State University, developed OER materials on anti-racism and implicit bias. These resources, adopted by the Connecticut State Police for officer training, are expected to save approximately \$50,000. When considering both student and State Police savings, the 2023 Grant Program has yielded a near-term return on investment for the state exceeding 2.5x.



***This impactful initiative bridges academia and law enforcement, promoting essential education in combating racism.***

# Student and Faculty **Perspectives**

## **Did You Know?**

According to the **#RealCollege 2021 survey**, nearly **3 in 5** college students across the U.S. experience basic needs insecurity (food and housing)

**"Textbooks can cost hundreds of dollars, which is money I could have spent on food, clothing, my car, my medication"**

—Connecticut Student

## **Did You Know?**

**17.5%** of students in the Connecticut State Colleges & Universities System report recent housing instability or homelessness.

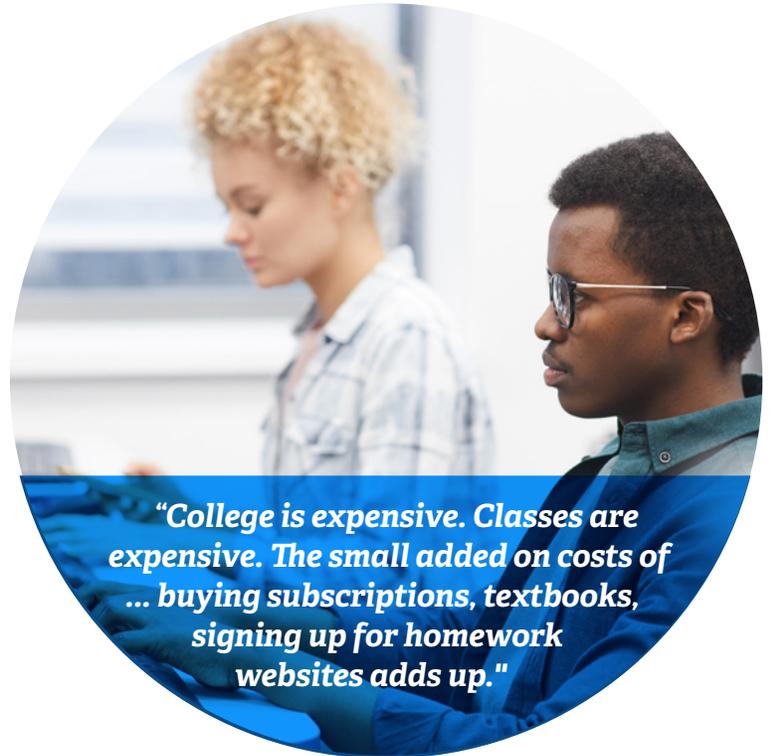
## Insights

### Student Perspectives

Grantees were required to collect qualitative data from the students enrolled in their OER courses. While the Council offered sample questions, grantees were not mandated to use these sample questions. As a result, it is not possible to compare the results of the student responses in a statistical form. It is, however, possible to cite student comments in order to identify noteworthy trends from the diverse data collection formats that the grantees used.

#### **Students responded enthusiastically to the opportunity that OER provide to reduce educational costs:**

- "OER allowed me to save the money I could've spent on the course materials to put toward my summer classes."
  - "In my other courses I spent over \$400 in total to obtain resources just to get through the class. Using OER exposed me to the possibility of still obtaining a quality education throughout a course without paying a dime."
  - "College is expensive. Classes are expensive. The small added on costs of being a student like buying subscriptions, textbooks, signing up for homework websites adds up. I'm grateful to be in a position to learn and study from resources that are both free and useful for me."



***"College is expensive. Classes are expensive. The small added on costs of ... buying subscriptions, textbooks, signing up for homework websites adds up."***



**Beyond mere cost savings, students were generally pleased with the quality of OER and noted that OER were a springboard for their academic success:**

- “I do not get any financial help from anywhere. OER is what encourages me to continue pursuing an education.”
- “I am very satisfied with the quality of OER materials I have encountered. I feel like the quality of the materials is better than the information I receive in other courses. The texts are much more valuable and substantial that we can apply to our daily lives.”
- “Usually, I wait until the very last minute to purchase overly expensive textbooks (due to having to save up to purchase), which means I am then rushing through my assignments to get them in on time. With them being free, I can get them at the beginning of the course and take my time studying and doing assignments.”



***“It was easily accessible from the first day, and I was never behind because of purchasing the book so I felt confident as a student.”***

***“We should have more OER because education is important for everyone, and it minimizes the disparity between those who have money to spend on these resources and those who do not.”***



- “Shifting to OER textbooks can make a difference because some students don’t buy textbooks due to the cost, thus significantly reducing their opportunities to fully digest the learning objectives of their courses.”

**Some students also saw strong connections between OER, open pedagogy, and positive social change:**

- “I am more motivated to study when using OER because I know the impacts of my work won’t just affect my grade but have the ability to help other students in the future and make an impact beyond just our classroom.”
- “It is inspiring and fulfilling to know that my work is having some kind of impact or change beyond just the grade I am trying to get in the course.”
- “I will always advocate for more OER in general as I believe it is a great solution to equity issues surrounding the cost of textbooks and additional course resources.”



***“...I believe it is a great solution to equity issues surrounding the cost of textbooks and additional course resources.”***

## Faculty Perspectives

Much like the students that they surveyed, faculty grantees were generally pleased with their experiences with OER. One aspect of their positive comments about OER tied to student savings. As one grantee comments, "In the end, I do not use OER because I receive a \$1,000 grant to do so; I use OER and other low-cost materials because it is the right thing to do." Along with student savings, faculty grantees identified strong connections between OER and student engagement and learning:

- "Students were able to engage with the material in a way that they chose. As a result, students were able to review the materials multiple ways, have different perspectives of the material, and also to draw conclusions from the material and topic of the week."
- "As educators committed to improvement, faculty plan to continue to use and expand OER because it reduces barriers to learning course material, engages students through different modalities, and helps reduce student costs."
- "Engaging your students in the revision, remixing, or creation of OER that meets our evolving needs is a valuable 21st-century learning experience."



***"Students were more prepared because they worked collaboratively and [held] themselves and their peers accountable."***

**Several faculty also highlighted the relations between OER and equity, diversity, and inclusion:**

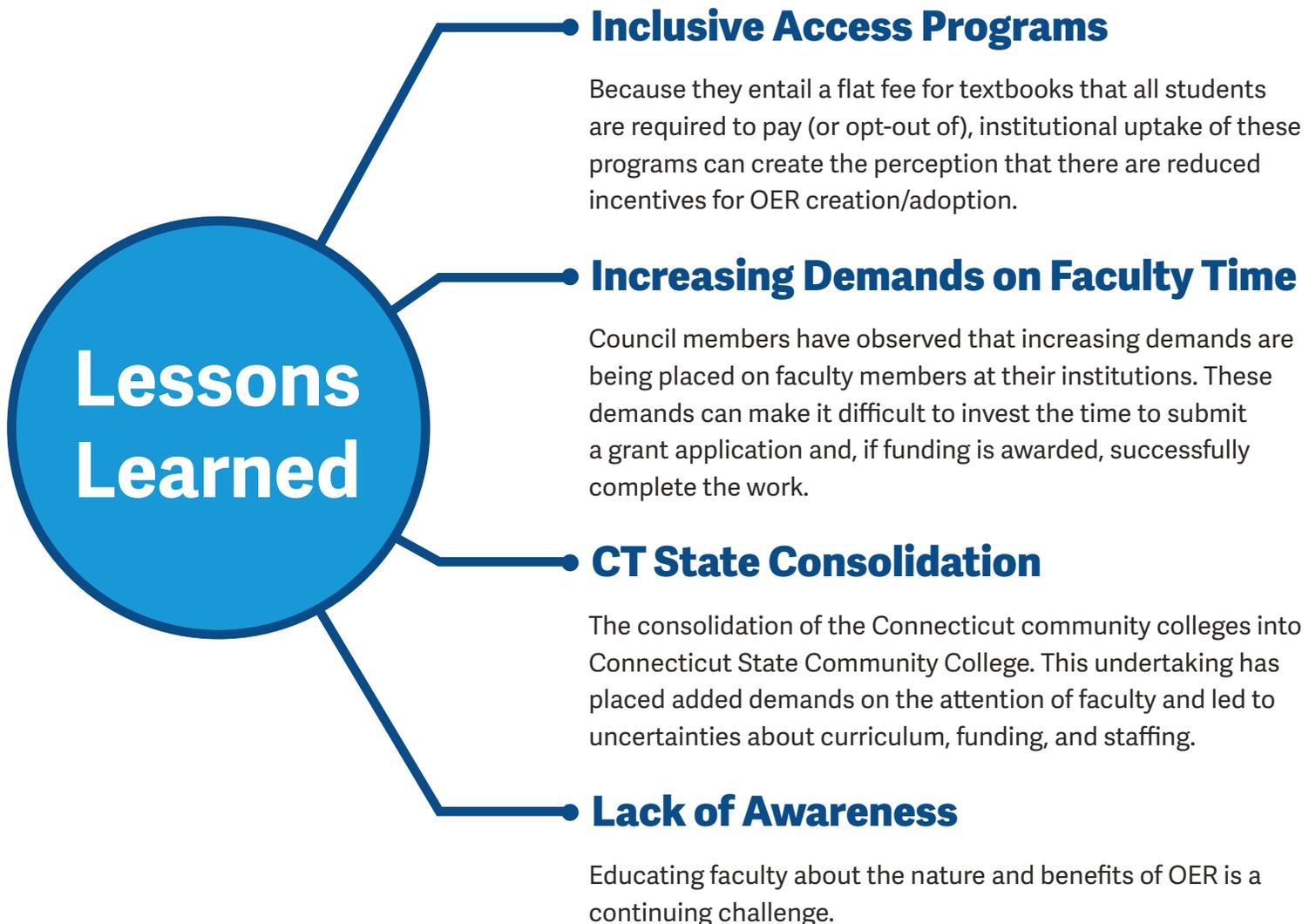
- “Traditional textbooks are not always inclusive of histories of people of color, members of the [LGBTQIA+] community, immigrants, and others. The created supplemental OER materials provide more nuanced, complex, and inclusive narratives. Given these significant benefits, faculty plan to continue to expand use of OER.”
- “A key concern I have as an instructor is humanizing the people at the heart of the course materials. It seems that students were able to recognize this element and also felt more cared for themselves by the usage of OER as it addressed an equity concern.”
- “[OER] offers the creative pedagogy and flexibility to incorporate artists who challenge traditions of academic art like women and artists of color.”



***“Traditional textbooks are not always inclusive of histories of people of color, members of the [LGBTQIA+] community, immigrants, and others.”***

## Lessons Learned

Despite the strong return on investment and the positive feedback from both students and faculty, the Council has noted a decline in grants that were awarded. The number of grantees declined from 28 in the 2022 grant cycle to 19 in the 2023 grant cycle. Factors that the Council speculates may have contributed to this decline include:



The Council will engage in continued discussions about how to better understand factors impacting engagement with its Grant Program. Additionally, the Council plans to leverage the 2024 OER Summit as an opportunity to build and sustain awareness about OER.

# Virtual Summit

The [2023 CT OER Summit](#) was held virtually March 6-10, 2023 and attracted 150 registrants representing 71 institutions across 23 states. The Summit featured daily spotlight sessions paired with themed "office works" through which participants could network and have conversations with Connecticut colleagues with OER-related expertise. Session titles and presenters included:

## The 2023 CT OER Summit

- 23 states
- 71 institutions

- "Bridging Policy and Practice through Open Education in New England" by Michael Thomas (President, New England Board of Higher Education)
- "Inclusive or Exclusive? Examining 'Inclusive Access' Textbook Programs" by Nicole Allen (Director of Open Education, SPARC)
- "OER Contributions in Tenure & Promotion" by Andrew McKinney (OER Coordinator, City University of New York)
- "2022 CT OER Grantee Spotlight" by a panel including Leon Brin (Southern Connecticut State University), Alan Bruce (Quinnipiac University), Katie Hall (University of Connecticut), and Beth Johnson - moderator (Post University)
- "The OER Advocate Toolkit: The Do's and Don'ts from One Advocate's Perspective" by Jillian Maynard (Reference & Instruction Librarian, Central Connecticut State University)



**Michael Thomas (President, New England Board of Higher Education) presenting on the topic of "Bridging Policy and Practice through Open Education in New England" at the 2023 OER Summit.**

# Statewide Survey

Each fall the Council distributes a survey to Connecticut’s institutions of higher education concerning those institutions’ OER usage and promotion. The 2023 survey included 25 questions and was completed by 26 institutions (vs. 19 in 2022) prior to the submission deadline of December 22, 2023. The response rate for the 2023 survey was 63%.

## Participating Institutions<sup>10</sup>

- Albertus Magnus College
- Central Connecticut State University
- Charter Oak State College
- Connecticut College
- CT State Community College Asnuntuck
- CT State Community College Capital
- CT State Community College Manchester
- CT State Community College Middlesex
- CT State Community College Naugatuck Valley
- CT State Community College Northwestern
- CT State Community College Quinebaug Valley
- CT State Community College Three Rivers
- CT State Community College Tunxis
- Eastern Connecticut State University
- Hartford Seminary
- Holy Apostles College and Seminary
- Mitchell College
- Quinnipiac University
- Southern Connecticut State University
- University of Bridgeport
- University of Connecticut
- University of Hartford
- University of New Haven
- University of Saint Joseph
- Wesleyan University
- Western Connecticut State University



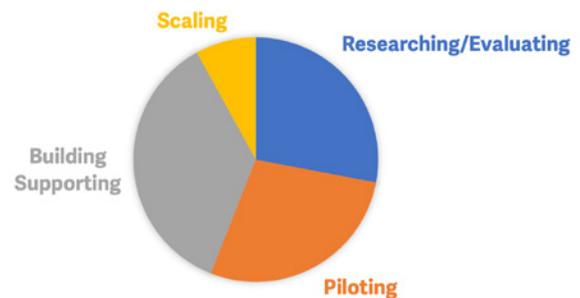
<sup>10</sup> At CT State Community College’s request, 2023 survey responses are separated by campus rather than being reported at an institutional level.

## Engagement

**96%**

of the respondents said that their institutions are engaging in OER adoption and/or creation. Of those respondents, 80% (about the same percentage as the 2022 survey) said that those OER initiatives have been in place for at least three years. When asked to describe their overall direction with OER, 28% of respondents said that they are either Researching or Evaluating OER efforts, another 28% are Piloting, 36% are Building/Supporting, and 8% are Scaling. None of the respondents have reached the survey choice indicative of the most advanced level of OER implementation: Sustaining Scale/Systemic Change.

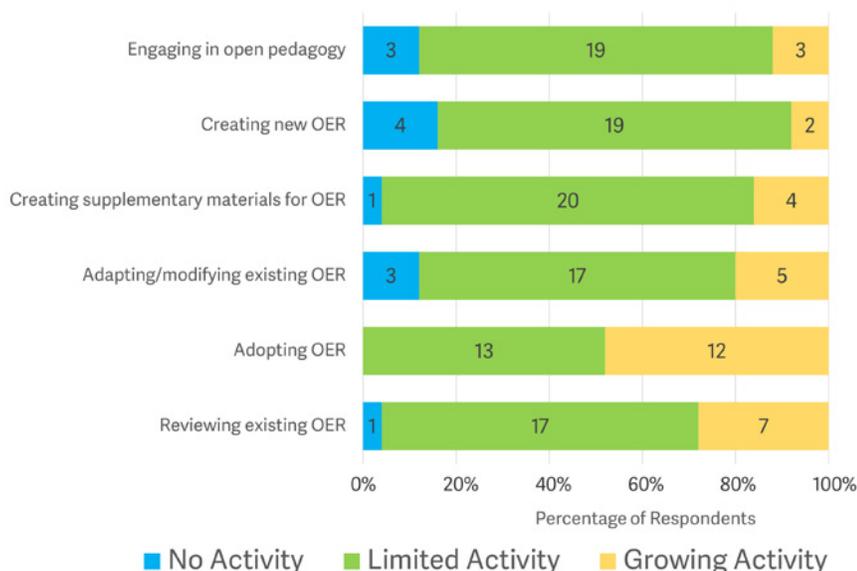
**Figure 1: Overall OER Direction**



When asked to expand on current institutional efforts regarding OER, most respondents said that they were engaged in Limited Activity across the spectrum of OER activities listed in the survey: Review (68%), Adoption (52%), Adaption (68%), Creating Supplemental Materials (80%), Creating New OER (76%), and Open Pedagogy (76%). A smaller portion of the respondents were engaged in a Growing Level of Activity: Review (28%), Adoption (48%), Adaption (20%), Creating Supplemental Materials (16%), Creating New OER (8%), and Open Pedagogy (12%). None of the respondents have a High Level for any of the activities.

Consistent with the results of prior surveys, responses to questions about institutional data collection indicate that most institutions do not collect data about the impact of OER. Indeed, only 20% of respondents track the impact of OER on Student Cost Avoidance/Savings and only 12% track the impact on Student Success Rates (Completion, GPA, and/or Retention).

**Figure 2: OER Activities**



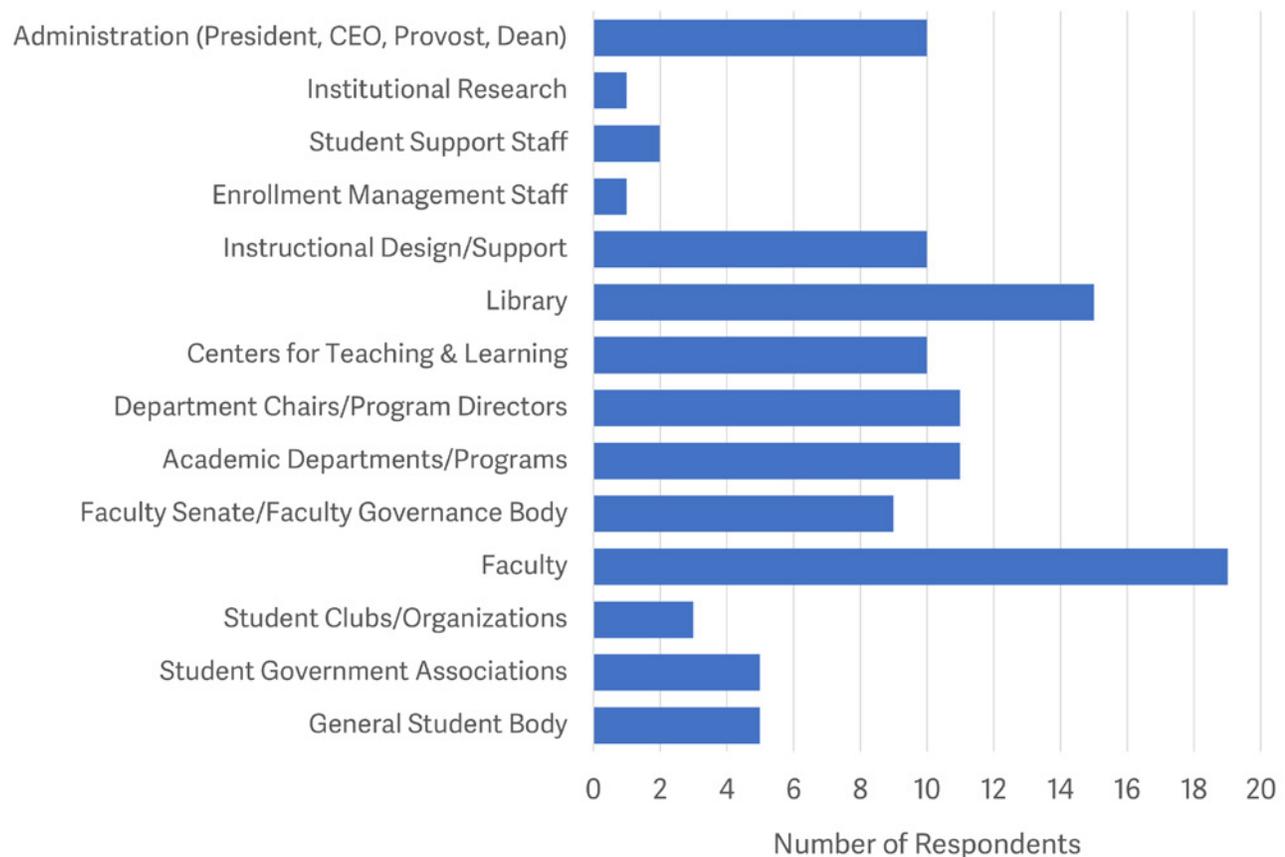
## Awareness & Promotion

Faculty continue to be a central focus of most institutions' OER awareness and promotion efforts. 73% of the respondents promote OER directly to faculty, and many respondents also indicate that Faculty Governance Bodies (35%), Academic Departments/Programs (42%), and Department Chairs/Program Directors (42%) were target audiences of awareness and promotion efforts. In addition to directing awareness and promotion efforts to faculty, 38% of the respondents direct such efforts to Administrators (President, CEO, Provost, Dean).

Institutional personnel with student support responsibilities were also an important target of awareness and promotion efforts. Substantial portions of respondents directed efforts to their Libraries (58%), Centers for Teaching & Learning (38%), and Instructional Design/Support offices (38%).

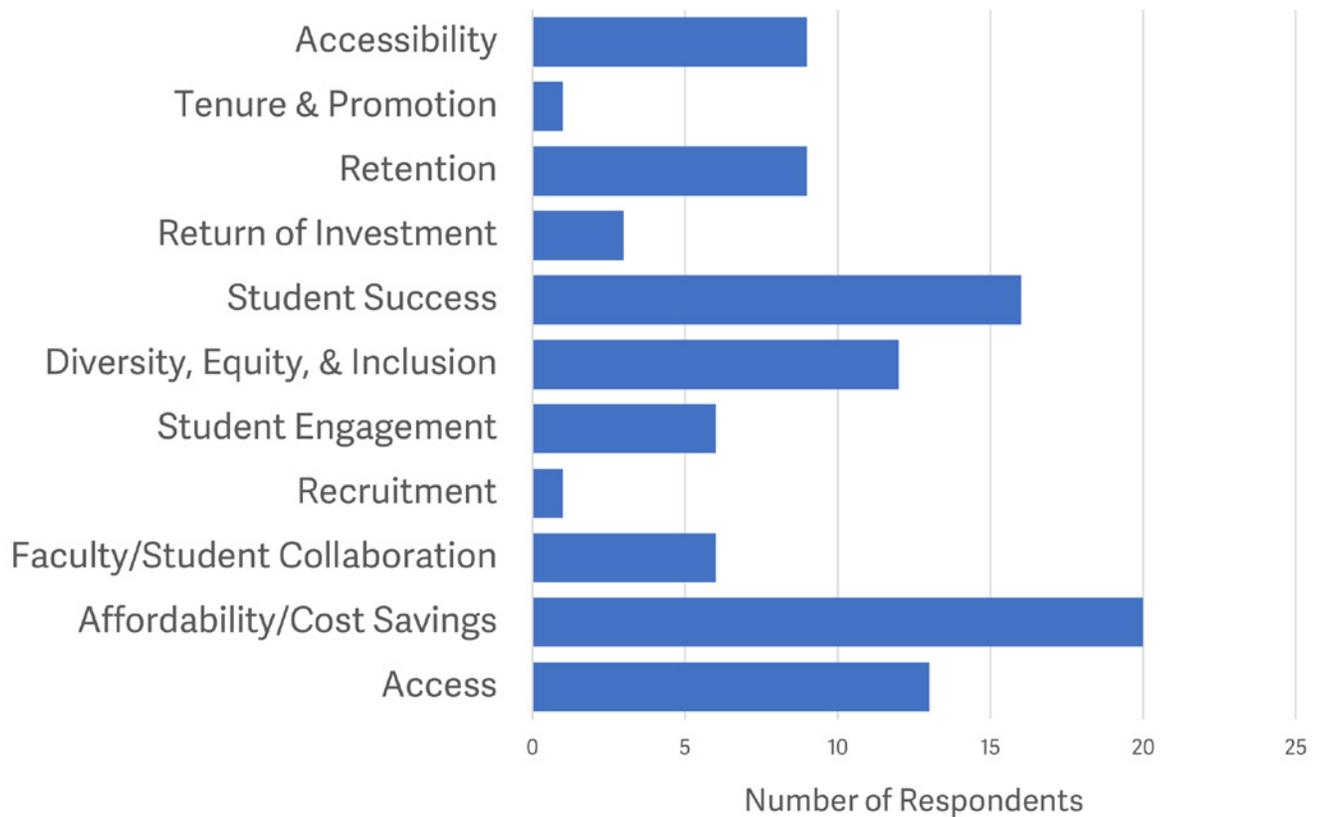
Students receive less attention when it comes to OER awareness and promotion with 19% of respondents indicating that they engage in efforts directed at the General Student Body and Student Government Associations and 12% engaging in efforts directed at Student Clubs/Organizations.

**Figure 3: Target Audiences for OER Awareness & Promotion**



As was the case with past surveys, most efforts to promote OER focus on the Access (50%) and Affordability (77%) of course materials. Efforts focused on Student Success (62%), Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (46%), Retention (35%), and Accessibility (35%) were also significant frames for promotion efforts.

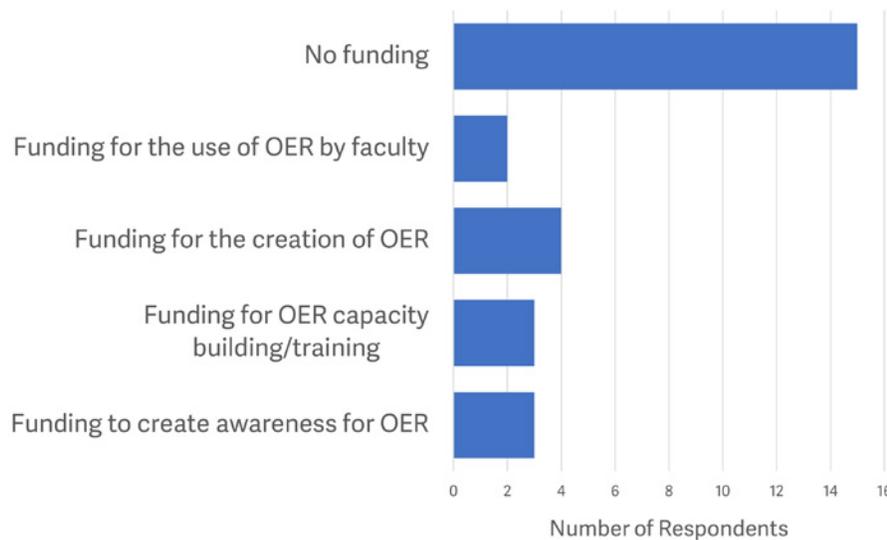
**Figure 4: OER Framing**



## Support

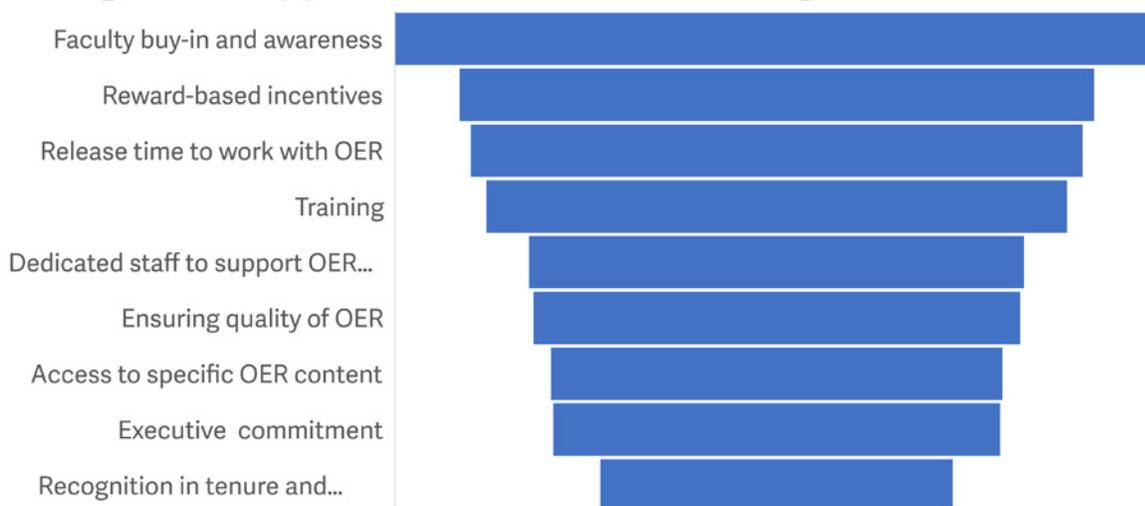
The survey asked for details about institutional funds that, in the past three years, have been used to support OER-related initiatives. Most respondents (58%) have no such funds, but a few respondents said that their institutions made funds available for Awareness (12%), Capacity Building/Training (12%), and Creation of New OER (15%).

**Figure 5: OER Funding**



One survey question asked respondents to rank factors and supports from most to least needed to increase institutional adoption and use. By a significant measure, Faculty Awareness/Buy-in was ranked highest. Other high ranking factors were Reward-based Incentives for Faculty (e.g., stipends, recognition) (ranked second), Release Time for Faculty to Work with OER (ranked third), and Training (ranked fourth).

**Figure 6: Supports Needed — Ranked Highest to Lowest**



## High Impact Course Areas

**Public Act Number 19-117** defines a “high impact course” as “a course of instruction for which open educational resources would make a significant positive financial impact on the students taking the course due to the number of students taking the course or the market value of the printed textbook or other educational resources required for such course.”

To identify these course areas, the Council conducted a 2019 survey of Connecticut institutions of higher education. More recently, the Council has applied the US Department of Education’s Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) taxonomy to ensure that the survey’s respondents consistently identified and reported such courses.

The high impact course areas along with their disciplines are listed in Table 4. The table lists the total number of course sections that the responding institutions offered in the 2022-23 academic year in each course area. The table also indicates the estimated number and percentage of course sections that solely use OER and/or freely available non-OER materials. Finally, the table provides enrollments for these subsets of course sections along with the estimated savings that the enrolled students received as a result of the no-cost nature of their course materials.

To formulate the estimates, the Council used the OER Savings Calculation Method of SPARC, which is “a non-profit advocacy organization that supports systems for research and education that are open by default and equitable by design.”<sup>11</sup> This method postulates the average cost savings/avoidance for student use of OER at \$117 per course/section. Accordingly, the savings amounts listed in the table are a product of the number of enrollments \$117. Given the OER data collection challenges that institutions continue to face, these savings, which total over \$2.2 million, are best framed as one-year bare minimum estimates based on the limited concrete data that was reported through the survey.

***At a minimum, anticipated one-year savings of \$2.2 million in high-impact course areas.***



<sup>11</sup> SPARC. (n.d.) Who we are. <https://sparcopen.org/who-we-are/>

## High Impact Areas by Subject

Subject	Total Sections	Number of Sections Using OER and/or Freely Available Materials	Percentage of Sections Using OER and/or Freely Available Materials	Enrollments in Sections Using OER and/or Freely Available Materials	Savings of Students Enrolled in Sections Using OER and/or Freely Available Materials
Accounting	264	6	2%	98	\$11,466.00
Anatomy	176	22	13%	574	\$67,158.00
Art	606	55	9%	1097	\$128,349.00
Biology	720	103	14%	1637	\$191,529.00
Business	245	23	9%	478	\$55,926.00
Chemistry	650	167	26%	2086	\$244,062.00
Communications	571	125	22%	2443	\$285,831.00
Computer Science	333	12	4%	195	\$22,815.00
Economics	476	17	4%	290	\$33,930.00
First Year	427	109	26%	2031	\$237,627.00
History	616	47	8%	1242	\$145,314.00
Law	368	80	22%	1352	\$158,184.00
Literature	538	32	6%	556	\$65,052.00
Management	422	38	9%	548	\$64,116.00
Marketing	157	5	3%	86	\$10,062.00
Mathematics	946	93	10%	1564	\$182,988.00
Nursing	354	5	1%	58	\$6,786.00
Physics	192	22	11%	183	\$21,411.00
Psychology	866	36	4%	1392	\$162,864.00
Sociology	503	56	11%	818	\$95,706.00
Writing	891	23	3%	478	\$55,926.00

## Top 5 Subjects by Adoption

Subject	Enrollments	Savings
Communications	2443	\$285,831.00
Chemistry	2086	\$244,062.00
First Year	2031	\$237,627.00
Biology	1637	\$191,529.00
Mathematics	1564	\$182,988.00

## Bottom 5 Subjects by Adoption

Subject	Enrollments	Savings
Nursing	58	\$6,786.00
Marketing	86	\$10,062.00
Accounting	98	\$11,466.00
Physics	183	\$21,411.00
Computer Science	195	\$22,815.00

The ten institutions listed in Table 7 reported the highest enrollments in high impact courses areas where OER and/or freely available non-OER materials were used. Compared to the “top ten” from last year’s report, the University of Bridgeport, the University of Saint Joseph, and Quinnipiac University are new additions.

## Institutions by OER Enrollments

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Enrollments in Sections Using OER and/or Freely Available Materials</b>	<b>Savings of Students Enrolled in Sections Using OER and/or Freely Available Materials</b>
<b>CT State Naugatuck Valley</b>	3671	\$429,507.00
<b>University of Connecticut</b>	3110	\$363,870.00
<b>CT State Manchester</b>	2377	\$278,109.00
<b>CT State Middlesex</b>	1898	\$222,066.00
<b>University of Bridgeport</b>	1720	\$201,240.00
<b>CT State Northwestern</b>	1672	\$195,624.00
<b>University of Saint Joseph</b>	1173	\$137,241.00
<b>Charter Oak State College</b>	1130	\$132,210.00
<b>Quinnipiac University</b>	1052	\$123,084.00
<b>CT State Tunxis</b>	782	\$91,494.00

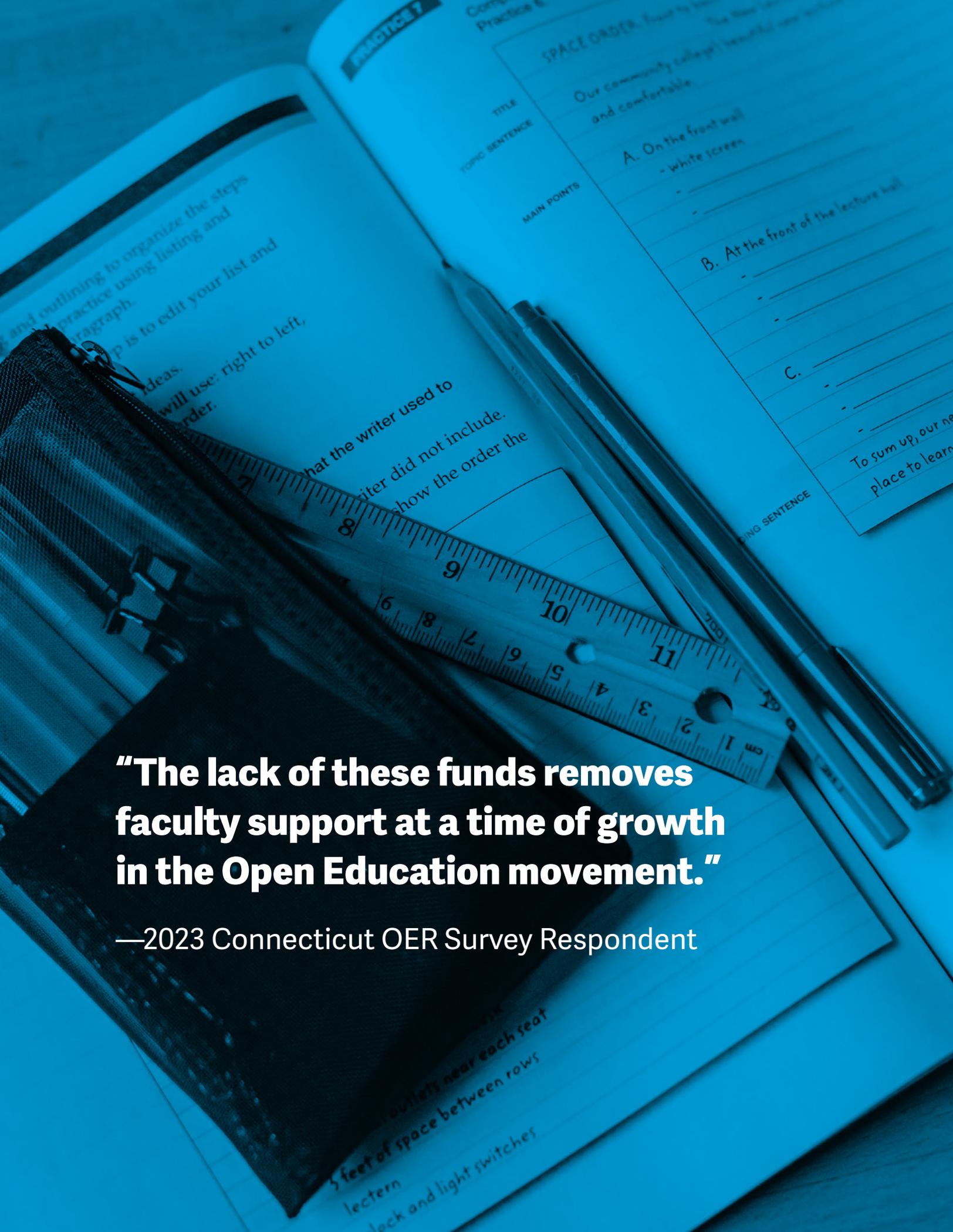
## Freely Available Non-OER Materials

This year the survey was broadened to include questions about materials that are freely available but that do not fall within the parameters of OER. These materials include [Open Access](#) content, library owned or licensed material, and digital access packages from publishers that are not charged to students. 92% of the respondents said that they use these materials in their institutions’ courses.

Moreover, for the high impact courses areas, these freely available non-OER materials were generally used as or more heavily than OER. Table 8 provides a breakdown of the high impact course areas and how costs were eliminated.

## Sources of Cost Savings in High Impact Course Areas

Subject	Costs Eliminated through OER	Costs Eliminated through Open Access Content	Costs Eliminated through Library Owned or Licensed Materials
Accounting	25%	25%	50%
Anatomy	40%	0%	60%
Art	38%	8%	38%
Biology	41%	24%	29%
Business	40%	10%	50%
Chemistry	28%	28%	28%
Communications	45%	9%	27%
Computer Science	38%	25%	38%
Economics	50%	13%	38%
First Year	35%	18%	29%
History	32%	27%	36%
Law	30%	20%	40%
Literature	42%	17%	33%
Management	45%	9%	45%
Marketing	33%	0%	67%
Mathematics	53%	27%	20%
Nursing	20%	0%	80%
Physics	40%	20%	30%
Psychology	43%	29%	29%
Sociology	38%	25%	38%
Statistics	60%	10%	20%
Writing	35%	24%	35%



**“The lack of these funds removes  
faculty support at a time of growth  
in the Open Education movement.”**

—2023 Connecticut OER Survey Respondent

## OER Utilization Outside of High Impact Course Areas

50% of the respondents said that their institutions offered additional courses outside of the “high impact” areas that use OER. Those 13 institutions reported an additional 6,081 students avoided \$711,477 (based on the SPARC calculation method) in course material costs.

### Analysis of Challenges

#### Data Collection and Reporting

As was the case with the previous surveys, the lack of formal data collection and reporting standards was a substantial problem in the 2023 survey. This problem was noted in respondent comments and limited the Council’s ability to accurately report on the impact of OER. In the Council’s [2022 report](#), the problem compelled the Council to recommend state legislation to establish common data definitions, collection methods, and/or student display of course sections that utilize OER. The Council is grateful to the General Assembly for having passed [Public Act Number 23-151](#) in the 2023 Legislative Session. The “model policy” called for in this Act should provide a foundation for improved data collection and reporting, and the Council looks forward to drafting this model policy in 2024.

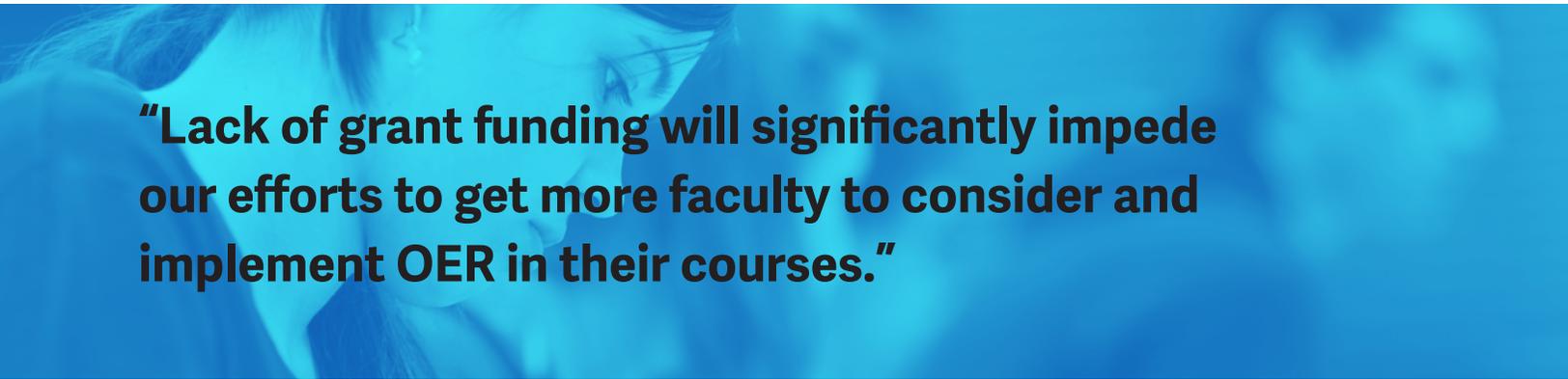


# Loss of State Funding

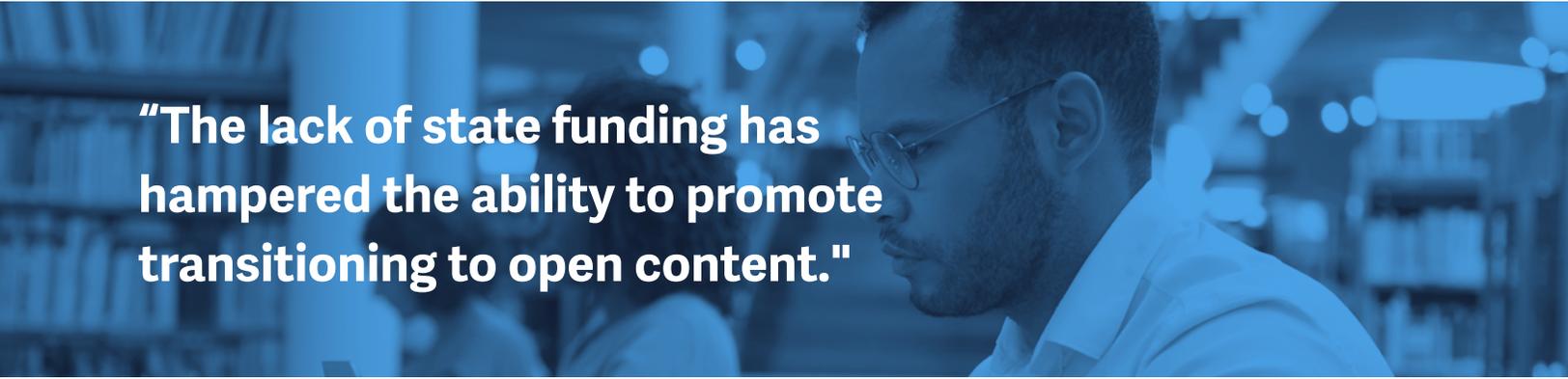
“Reward-based Incentives for Faculty (e.g., stipends, recognition)” are one of the most important support mechanisms that survey respondents said that they needed to advance the use and impact of OER at their institutions. With this point in mind, it is not surprising that many respondents indicated dismay about the impacts of the elimination of state funding for the Council’s OER Grant Program and annual OER Summit. Examples of respondents’ concerns include the following:



**“Momentum for OER is just beginning to build at our institution after many years of grassroots awareness raising.”**



**“Lack of grant funding will significantly impede our efforts to get more faculty to consider and implement OER in their courses.”**



**“The lack of state funding has hampered the ability to promote transitioning to open content.”**

# 2024: Plans for Year 5



**Plan and host 5th Annual OER Summit in-person**



**Develop the “model policy” called for in Public Act Number 23-151**



**Organize a 2024 cycle of the OER Grant Program**



**Review program guidelines to ensure institutions with Inclusive Access programs are eligible for grant funds**

## 2024: Plans for Year 5

The Council has identified three primary areas of focus in 2024, its fifth year of activity. In the spring semester, the Council is organizing a 2024 OER Summit. Like the Council’s past summits, the 2024 Summit will promote awareness of and engagement with OER and will be free for all faculty and staff affiliated with a Connecticut institution of higher education. Unlike the summits held since the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2024 summit will be an in-person event that occurs on the campus of a Connecticut college or university. With this shift back to an in-person event, the 2024 Summit will place a special emphasis on offering opportunities through which attendees can develop support networks to facilitate OER work. The Council will soon announce information about the date, location, and agenda for this event.

*The 2024 summit will be an in-person event that occurs on the campus of a Connecticut college or university.*

Another major area of attention for the Council in 2024 will be the development of the “model policy” called for in [Public Act Number 23-151](#). This model policy will address definitions of OER-related terms, methods for data collection, and ways to present online course catalogs to students to clearly identify each course using OER. A working group of the Council has already carried out a scan of other states’ policies, and the Council will build on this work by organizing meetings with various stakeholder groups in Connecticut’s higher education community. These meetings should help ensure that the Council can draft a model policy that receives uptake within the state’s institutions of higher education.



Finally, the Council plans to organize a 2024 cycle of its Grant Program. The 2024 Grant Program will use a small pocket of funds left over from the 2023 programs and will be much more limited in scope than in previous years. The Council will review program guidelines to ensure that institutions (e.g., the University of Connecticut) with [Inclusive Access](#) programs (wherein textbook costs are automatically bundled with tuition and fees) are eligible for grant funds. Eligibility will require that such institutions give students the ability to “opt out” of the programs if they prefer not to participate. Without restoration of funding, 2024 will be the last iteration of the state’s OER Grant Program.

# Recommendation: Funding Restoration

As discussed throughout this report, **the state has eliminated all FY2024 and FY2025 funding for the Council.** Previously, the state had funded the Council in the amount of \$100,000 annually.

Given the substantial positive impacts of the Grant Program ([see page 11](#)), exceptional ROI ([see page 2](#)), and strong concerns about loss of funding voiced by the state's institutions of higher education ([see page 13](#)), the Council urges the state to consider a full restoration of funding (**\$100,000 annually**).

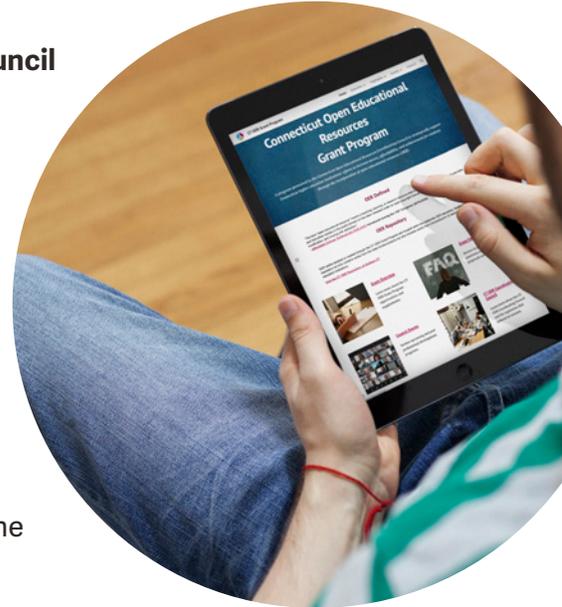


**Without state funding, the Council will be forced to drastically curtail its activities and eliminate the Connecticut OER Grant Program.**

# Acknowledgments

The Connecticut OER Coordinating Council would like to extend its thanks and appreciation to many individuals and organizations.

For their assistance in the distribution of the 2023 OER Survey, the **Council thanks the Connecticut Office of Higher Education, the Council of Connecticut Academic Library Directors, and the CSCU OER Advisory Council**, which is co-chaired by **Hayley Battaglia** (Serials and Electronic Resources Librarian, Southern Connecticut State University) and **Jillian Maynard** (Reference and Instruction Librarian, Central Connecticut State University). Additionally, the Council is grateful to the **University of Connecticut** for hosting the survey platform, **Zach Claybaugh** (Student Success Librarian, University of Connecticut) for leading the development and administration of the survey form, and **Susanna Cowan** (Assessment Strategist, University of Connecticut) for her assistance with management and analysis of the survey results.



For her management of the Grant Program platform, the Council thanks **Aura Lippincott** (Instructional Design, Western Connecticut State University). The Council's thanks also go to the **Connecticut Commission for Educational Technology**, which administers [GoOpenCT](#), the platform that grantees use to deposit their completed work.

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Lastly, the Council wishes to acknowledge and celebrate the outstanding leadership of **Kevin Corcoran**, who served as the Council's Chair from its inception in 2019 to spring 2023 and who now holds the position of Assistant Vice Provost of the Center for Distributed Learning at the University of Central Florida. The Council and the state are deeply indebted to Kevin for his vision, energy, and collaborative spirit in support of the advancement of OER.

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- **Thomas Barron**, Director of Business and Technology Programs, Charter Oak State College
- **Emily Bjornberg**, Senior Consultant, Office of Higher Education
- **Patrick Carr**, Program Manager for Library Consortium Operations, Connecticut State Colleges & Universities (Chair)
- **Zach Claybaugh**, Student Success Librarian, University of Connecticut
- **Isabella Cruz**, Student, Eastern Connecticut State University
- **Paula Dowd**, Academic Dean of Nursing and Health Careers, Connecticut State Community College
- **David Ferreira**, Provost, Charter Oak State College
- **Tina Huey**, Associate Director of Faculty Development, University of Connecticut
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- **Bob Wyckoff**, Professor of English, Connecticut State Community College Housatonic

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# Connecticut Open Educational Resources Coordinating Council 2023 Legislative Report

CT OER Grant Program

[Home](#)

[Overview](#) ▾

[Highlights](#)

OER works adopted or created through the CT OER Grant Program are housed within the statewide OER repository not only contains works from the state funded projects but also includes works from Connecticut K-12 education institutions.

[Visit the CT OER Repository at GoOpen CT](#)



## Grant Overview

Learn more about the CT OER Grant Program opportunities and requirements.



## Grant FAQ

Review frequently asked questions and proposals.



## Council Events

Review upcoming and past professional development programs.



## CT OER Coordinating Council

Learn more about the OER Coordinating Council and the legislation that defined its mission.