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Item Type	article
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Rights	UMass Amherst Open Access Policy
Download date	2025-03-25 19:45:53
Item License	http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/
Link to Item	https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14394/32262

Open Partnerships: Identifying and Recruiting Allies for Open Educational Resources Initiatives

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Introduction: The Value of Having Partners—Why You Don't Want to Go It Alone

Leading or partnering with others on an open educational resources (OER) initiative is one of many ways libraries provide value to students, as well as visibility on campus. As Joseph A. Salem Jr. suggests, "... partnering early in the process will allow the library to lead in areas where expertise is needed and missing. If no programmatic approach is underway, these partnerships offer the library an opportunity to lead overall on an initiative focused on student success" (Salem, 2017). Combining library services with others across the institution may result in a robust, enriching initiative, leveraging various types of expertise or infrastructure throughout an institution.

The successful OER initiatives that we discuss here have been built upon partnerships. Partnerships may include any number of individuals or groups ranging from libraries, the Student Government Association (SGA), faculty support offices, bookstores, administration, and more (including outside your institution). A possible starting point for a partnership is to first consider your available resources, the needs at your institution, and what would help bridge the gaps. Promoting what you have to offer, while seeking others to complement those resources or services, can naturally lead to opportunities to partner. Libraries, for example, may have key services in place that contribute to OER initiatives, such as assistance finding high-quality OER, copyright consultation, central infrastructure, expertise in publishing, and existing relationships with campus departments. While partnerships are not necessary for implementing an OER initiative, for our universities' partners they have been

invaluable in increasing awareness, building and sustaining momentum, and bringing a variety of perspectives, skills, and resources that contribute to long-term success.

Throughout departments, colleges, and universities there are shared goals involving education affordability and student success, which dovetail with OER goals. “Combining the strengths of key campus units to build OER into the campus culture” is a powerful way to move these goals forward (Woodward, 2017). Partnerships can bring many benefits, but require effort, ongoing development, and flexibility. Partnerships may be a time-consuming, labor-intensive way to move an initiative forward, yet the authors have found the rewards can be exponential in return. Goodset, Loomis, and Miles found that the “greatest challenge in collaborating with a faculty member, perhaps unsurprisingly, was navigating schedules and deadlines,” and that agreed-upon methods of communication were “essential” (Goodset, Loomis, & Miles, 2016). This holds true of all partnerships, and becomes more challenging and critical as additional partners join the initiative. Goals and expectations should be clearly stated, agreed upon, and periodically revisited throughout collaborations. That being said, it is also important to be flexible in your goals and expectations.

In this chapter, we describe OER partnerships at three institutions: University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMass Amherst), Kansas State University (K-State), and Grand Valley State University (GVSU). In each institution, the libraries are a leading partner in OER initiatives, joined and supported by a variety of partners from the university community. Throughout the chapter, our discussion of these partnerships will illustrate a variety of different goals and outcomes. In some instances, the nature of the partnership is focused largely on advocacy. In others, new services were developed to meet faculty pedagogy and student learning needs. And in other examples, existing services and infrastructure were combined to provide more cohesive support for supporting OER. With each stakeholder, we highlight potential hooks and motivations for the partner’s involvement, roadblocks you may encounter recruiting them, and benefits of their participation. Our goal is to share our experiences through this framework so that you may be able to identify similar partners within your institution, customize and implement strategies we describe, and overcome the challenges inherent in OER collaboration.

Library

Following the path blazed by educational technologists, distance educators, and instructional designers at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) with the creation of their OpenCourseWare program in the early 2000s (Abelson, 2008) libraries have begun to fully embrace and support the development of OER in the last decade. Initially thought of as content locators, contributors, and organizers (Atkins, Brown, & Hammond, 2007), libraries are now leading OER funding initiatives, educating faculty, and providing infrastructure for the storage, creation, and dissemination of OER (Kleymeer, Kleinman, & Hanss, 2010; Santos-Hermosa, 2012; Gallant, 2015). The authors' libraries have recognized the connections between OER efforts, which work to remove the barrier of high-cost resources for students and encourage new teaching methods for faculty, and existing open access (OA) and open data work. To address the faculty concern that they do not have time to find or create alternatives to their existing teaching materials, libraries have begun to initiate and coordinate incentive and grant programs, develop or support the work of other campus OER efforts, and dedicate staff time to supporting and advocating on behalf of OER.

OER efforts may be led by or centralized in one of many different library units. Many germinate in scholarly communication departments due to their expertise in OA publishing, institutional repositories (IR), fair use, and guidance on the use of Creative Commons and other copyright/intellectual property rights issues (Wesolek et al., 2017). Library teaching and learning, collections, or administration units are similarly well suited to support OER programs (Yano, 2017). For academic department liaisons, reference and reserves staff, library administrators, and student support teams, collaboration on OER may be an opportunity to build new relationships with departments, demonstrate the library's value to campus, or meet student information needs. No matter what library unit they belong to, find someone who is passionate about these issues and willing to advocate on behalf of your efforts. If you are not a librarian and planning to launch an OER program, the library should be one of your first partners.

In addition to material support, libraries may offer funding opportunities for OER. With the growing trend of library budgets moving away from "big deal" journal packages (Anderson, 2017), there is an opportu-

nity to reallocate these funds towards OA projects. Many libraries have Friends of the Library or other community groups willing to support initiatives that directly impact students. Library development offices can be great at finding alumni or large donors who want to support the library in a meaningful way. Libraries may also have access to federal grant funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), which both support the development of open materials. However, it's no secret that library budgets are tight; since OER is a relatively new area for libraries it has not, with some exceptions, established a foothold in traditional library budgets. OER funding often falls into the "special projects" category and is thus not necessarily sustainable over the long term. Greater efforts to institutionalize funding for OER within libraries will need to happen in the future to guarantee their viability as a core library service.

Currently, full-time OER positions in libraries are rare. Many OER efforts on U.S. campuses are managed by someone with other responsibilities, such as IR management, reference, or undergraduate support (Okamoto, 2013; Kleymeer et al., 2010). One way to gradually introduce more OER work into the library is by including it in revised job descriptions following retirements and vacancies. But even without new positions there is a plethora of existing staff who can help spread the word about OER. Library subject specialists or reference staff, who interact with faculty regularly and are great promoters of library services, can introduce faculty to the concept of OER and recruit them to participate in a program. They can also create or assist with creating OER subject guides. Reserves departments can plug OER when faculty are looking for course materials or placing textbooks in the reserves collection. Archives and special collections departments can present faculty with untapped, unique archival material that can be used as teaching materials. Metadata staff can assist with resource description that helps surface OER in local catalogs and worldwide indexes. Acquisitions staff can identify and ingest quality OA journals, monographs, and textbooks. Library development and communications departments can promote OER efforts as well as develop possible funding streams for an OER initiative. Libraries can also provide infrastructure support for OER projects. Many academic libraries have stable fiscal processing ingest for processing grants/awards. Libraries also

often support an institutional repository or OA press that provides hosting and publishing of locally created OER. The fabric of support for OER runs throughout almost every unit in the library.

Libraries, however, are not always equipped to provide expert advice on all OER matters. Support for the mechanics of publishing (copy editing, proofreading, editorial decisions, layout, graphic design, etc.) is something that OER authors frequently need that libraries can't always provide—as with GVSU's library publishing program, which has relied on authors to prepare and format OER before they are made available online. Libraries have increasingly started to collaborate with university presses and others to address this need (Sutton & Chadwell, 2014). The accessibility of the variety of formats generated with OER content, especially video and audio material, is oftentimes outside the area of libraries' expertise as well. Partnerships, vendors, and training are some of the ways to address this important aspect of OER creation, but there are others. K-State, for instance, addresses accessibility issues in one way by inviting someone from the Student Access Center to sit on each application review board. UMass Amherst Libraries recently partnered with the Assistive Technology Center to provide training for staff and students on closed captioning and audio description of video material.

Even when a library has the potential to support all aspects of an OER program, collaborating with allies on campus enables the resources and time of the library and librarians to have faster, greater, and better impact. Let's look at some other campus stakeholders you may want to include in an OER initiative.

Faculty

Faculty members are an absolutely vital partner in OER initiatives on your campus. Plain and simple, because faculty teach the courses, if faculty do not become involved in the process you cannot have a successful OER initiative. The good news is that it takes just one to start. Most likely you already have at least one faculty member in mind or as a friend on campus where you may be able to begin. Reaching out to connections that you already know, or know exist, is a great first step in building faculty partners. If you are new to campus or don't feel that your connections are right, reach out to the individuals within the library, who we discussed above,

that may have or may want to have a vested interest in OER. Ask these individuals to introduce you to their faculty connections, which can be as simple as a forwarded email with a short message or meeting for coffee.

You may also have faculty on campus who are already using an open or alternative resource. These faculty may be able to convert another course to OER and they may let you know which faculty have shown interest in their efforts on campus. Plus, they can be the obvious, great examples of how OER can work on your campus. Once you have worked with faculty on campus, you may be able to call upon them to participate in future OER events, share their experiences in promotional material, and to convert other courses that they have in their course load. It is important to remain in contact with faculty who have participated in the initiative, to ensure that they are continuing use of the resource and have been satisfied with the process. Use their feedback to make improvements when possible and be sure to communicate your efforts with them, as faculty word of mouth can be a powerful tool in making future faculty partners.

Beyond being trailblazers for selecting and implementing OER, faculty also serve as advocates among their colleagues. Faculty may be sources of expertise, bringing direct hands-on experience of using OER. These faculty can be great allies in creating and supporting the initiative on campus and in some cases may become an initiative partner or member of your OER committee. In fact, the K-State Open/Alternative Textbook Initiative Team consists of faculty members from three different departments on campus and several others are asked to join the review committee each year.

In addition to individual connections, there are several other ways to connect to faculty on campus. Calls for applicants or interested faculty should be placed in your campus communications channels (i.e. email, newsletters, magazines, flyers) that you have available. Holding events and activities on OER during nationally recognized open access or open education weeks can draw in faculty and highlight OER efforts on your local campus. Attend other faculty-focused events and make small talk with other attendees. Where appropriate, mention that you may be able to provide grant funding and/or support for their transition to OER. Even when you can't talk about your initiative, you are expanding your connections.

When possible, reach out to those you met to reintroduce yourself, and don't forget a link to your OER website in your email signature.

Some universities have, on their own or working with an external partner like Open Textbook Network, held workshops to inform faculty about the impact of open textbooks. During these workshops, faculty are asked to complete a review on an existing open textbook to gain familiarity with a resource that they may want to use in their course. Faculty may receive a small stipend or award for their participation, depending on your local policy and resources. At K-State, some faculty have reported uncertainty in completing the OER grant application itself. If you have an application for participation, providing information sessions where the application process is explained and discussed can provide faculty an added comfort level in completing the process. At the very least, this provides you an opportunity to interact with faculty who show some level of interest in participation.

Soured or unsatisfied faculty relationships with commercial publishers can also lead faculty towards OER. At GSVU, the general chemistry course has adopted an OpenStax textbook in reaction to publisher price hikes. Faculty at K-State frequently report dissatisfaction with commercial options as a prime reason they are looking at OER. OER has given faculty the ability to produce a textbook for a discipline that commercial publishers have not yet shown interest in or that is too niche to recoup investments. Faculty with a passion for these areas may be looking for an outlet and OER is the perfect option. The most important thing to keep in mind with faculty partners is to not dictate what you want them to incorporate into their course. You may even hold off on suggesting content until they have asked you for possible options.

Faculty members, at our universities and more generally, have some degree of freedom to select their desired course materials. The AAUP Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure states academic freedom "is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning" (American Association of University Professors, 1940). Whether committees or individual instructors select the resource, faculty usually decide on the text. If doing so by committee, you just have more people to enlist. Ultimately, faculty are the ones who can make the decision to move a course to OER.

Research by Tyton Partners support “Faculty time/effort” as a reported obstacle for all faculty by administrators in digital learning (Lammers & Tyton Partners, 2017). As OER coordinators, we see that this is especially true as it pertains to reviewing OER content for use in courses. Faculty may have more opportunity to conduct these tasks during the summer months, when they have fewer demands on their daily routines. Some faculty are off-contract with their college or university over the summer and can use grants/awards for stipends to cover their efforts during this time. Faculty without publishing experience may have concerns over their lack of expertise. These faculty should factor the costs of publishing, such as copy editing, into their applications when applying for their grant award.

To alleviate quality concerns, faculty should be encouraged to gather and reflect on reviews of their OER. For newly created content, authors are asked to receive traditional textbook reviews from internal/campus and external reviewers in their discipline. Along with gathering and incorporating feedback from traditional reviews, each semester students in the course will provide or should be asked about their perceptions on the quality and relevance of the content to their needs. Hearing that students valued and appreciated the OER has led faculty at K-State to convert additional courses to using OER.

Multiple faculty members at each of the authors’ institutions have explored, adopted, adapted, or created OER. By the end of spring 2017 K-State had granted OER awards to approximately 80 faculty from 26 different departments. The faculty of the math departments at both GSVU and K-State have been actively involved in converting their courses to OER to provide innovative teaching to their students. Faculty members from our initiatives have reported that they are interested in OER as a way to provide flexibility in their teaching and more learning options for their students. Faculty instructors report concern for student costs as a major factor in the selection of course materials, as well as the quality of the resource, providing a fair and equitable resource, and student engagement (Green, 2016). Faculty have discipline-specific and pedagogical expertise that make them excellent OER partners for evaluating and creating resources to use in their courses.

Academic Department Heads

Department heads make a strong partner in OER as they may stall or accelerate your OER program. Unlike many other partners whose primary focus is on student success, department heads are more focused on their faculty and departmental success, even if they still teach one or two courses. You may be able to identify the department's current priorities by reviewing their goals, mission, and other documents (if any are available to you). Often, a department head's first consideration will be the faculty tenure and promotion process and how a faculty member's commitment of time on a textbook fits in with their other duties and requirements. Also, for some faculty, the creation of OER is not an added value to their portfolio. Working on an open textbook project could lead to a department head discouraging participation. Unknown challenges for new faculty can mean added stress, mainly due to limited faculty and/or department time. Showing how an open textbook could impact positively on a particular discipline, improve teaching evaluations, bring the faculty teaching awards, or provide opportunities to produce research on the integration of OER in the classroom, can help persuade a resistant department head. It is also beneficial to know, in advance, where to find and create OER before approaching the department head. This will show the department head that you are ready to assist their faculty if they are ready to encourage the change.

Some departments on our campuses have struggled in the past with unifying courses taught by several graduate/teaching assistants. Suggesting the adoption of a single OA textbook can elevate this issue and ensure that, even if the teaching styles still vary, all the students are learning from the same content. This strategy has brought whole teams of faculty on board at once for some K-State courses. Using a \$100 average cost savings for a course with 1,800 yearly student enrollments provides department heads evidence that moving large courses to open educational resources means the department is able to show the students large savings and the dean a large return on investment. However, moving smaller courses to OER allows the department and faculty to experiment with the process, ensure they will receive a reward or see a benefit, and encourages faculty or the department to do what they want to do first. With either approach, departments have had success, so encourage the department head to use

the approach that feels most comfortable. You should work with the department head to prepare for rotation of faculty and staff and discuss the possibilities of the course being cancelled. These can be signs of courses that may not be ready for conversion, or the opposite—those that are primed for OER.

In our experience, certain departments have internal peer pressure to not go open. The best counterweight to this is education. On the other hand, some subject areas are embracing OER wholeheartedly and at the authors' institutions, department head allies are providing support to faculty for additional resources that go beyond grant funding. We have even seen department heads providing funds to cover commercial textbook conversions when OER initiatives cannot. Money is far from the only support a department head can offer: asking a department head at GSVU to help promote an OER event resulted in that department's faculty contributing over half of the event's participants.

Department heads at K-State have also begun to show interest in being able to identify courses, (through an icon next to that department's courses in the course catalog), that are using OER as a draw for students. Since this has only been implemented for a couple of semesters we are not able to determine the rate of positive draw or negative push of this icon, but we have had faculty requesting the icon be added to their course and report of a faculty member worried that the icon would have students enrolling in the other section instead of their own. In addition, with easy identification and searching the OER icon can be used in future marketing of their department to draw in new students.

K-State has the benefit of having department heads as lead developers and participants on the Open/Alternative Textbook Initiative team. Most direct outreach to other campus department heads has been directly from our mathematics department head partner, which, as colleagues in this role at the university, has made for an easier, and often more candid conversation about the possibilities of converting department courses. These open discussions have aided in identifying barriers that may be an obstacle for specific areas. A recently implemented student fee for approved courses using an open or alternative textbook has caught the attention of several department heads on campus. With this, 89 percent of the \$10.00 fee (per student) goes directly to the department. Having depart-

ment heads on the team who understand budget constraints it was very important to not limit the funds, apart from following already approved university guidelines for spending. For the K-State mathematics department last year, that was over \$30,000 for the first year of participation.

Department heads are the captains of the department “ship” whose job it is to set the direction and look out for the “shipmates.” For these partners you will need to let them choose the path, demonstrate that you are prepared, and find a way to show there are big rewards for the efforts. With these strategies, we hope to see more department heads encouraging strong support and adoption over next few years.

Students

In discussions surrounding the cost of textbooks and OER, the student voice is central. Students are the stakeholders who are most directly impacted by textbook costs and should be involved in working toward alternatives. The high cost of textbooks is often the cause of students not buying required textbooks, taking fewer courses, or receiving poor grades because they didn’t have the books (Florida Virtual Campus, 2016). With the increased availability and awareness of OER, there is now an alternative that can help mitigate the cost issue. Because of the tangible impact on their day-to-day finances, it is very easy for students to see the benefits of OER. The challenge is finding ways to channel that awareness into action. But it is worth it. Students can be the most passionate, articulate, and authoritative voices on behalf of OER efforts. On our campuses, collaboration with students range from activism to advocacy. Students, if well organized, can have significant influence over their peers, professors, and administrators.

One place to begin to collaborate with students is your local SGA. The common goal of the SGA is to advocate on behalf of students, and as a result, SGAs have a built-in infrastructure where they can encourage faculty and administrators to support OER. SGAs also often have access to funds that can be used for OER incentive programs. At K-State, the SGA supplied funds for the local initiative, edited, paid for, and wrote promotional materials, and successfully advocated for an “OER icon” that is included in the course catalog next to classes that use open or alternative materials.¹

¹ K-State open or alternative resources can include: the use or adaptation

They also supported and helped advocate for a student fee to help pay for open/alternative courses.

SGAs frequently have close connections with other student representatives in the region, so you may encourage them to reach out and discuss how OER programs are working on other campuses. GVSU's SGA has focused on awareness, helping to raise the profile of OER by distributing promotional materials, holding events, and passing resolutions to encourage OER adoption. At UMass Amherst, the SGA, with the assistance of the library, began recognizing faculty "OER Champions". The SGA publicly recognizes the faculty member for their efforts to ease the financial burden on students. Non-monetary student recognition of faculty OER use can be a valuable incentive: a similar initiative at Texas A&M University was designed so that the SGA's award could be used by the faculty as evidence of teaching quality for tenure and promotion (Herbert, 2016).

The SGA can reach campus leaders through representation in faculty governance, meetings with administrators, and Boards of Trustees meetings. Libraries or other campus OER partners can support student leaders as they meet one-on-one with provosts to advocate for increased support of OER programs. OER leaders may "coach" students before these meetings with general facts about OER as well as local qualitative and quantitative data illustrating the need for, and benefits of, OER. During faculty governance meetings, the SGA has an opportunity to speak on a topic of their choice. They can use this opportunity to educate faculty about OER and encourage them to seek local support for the use and development of OER in the classroom. SGA candidates running for office may also use OER as part of their election platform. Students at K-State did this and were successfully elected (K-State Today, 2015). Partnering with the SGA can prove to be very effective at advancing an OER campaign at the grass-roots level.

In addition to the SGA, any student groups working on issues of affordability, student debt, or access to higher education are great candidates for collaboration. At UMass Amherst, the state PIRG (Public Interest Research Group) has followed the lead of U.S.PIRG and begun working

of an existing open access textbook, library resources, high quality OER, media, and/or faculty-authored materials.

on a textbook affordability campaign. The UMass Amherst Libraries has worked with MassPIRG to support their #TextbookBroke campaign (Student Government Resource Center, 2014). They have set up information tables in high student traffic areas, collected data about textbook costs, and handed out postcards for students to give professors that encourage them to consider OER. Although cost is not the sole consideration for faculty when choosing textbooks, it is a factor, along with quality and effectiveness (Allen & Seaman, 2016). If faculty hear from students that they cannot, or will not, buy a book because of the cost, it can help motivate faculty to look more closely at OER.

Of course, not all work with students may be fruitful. Because of their transient nature, it is hard to nurture long-term partnerships and maintain relationships with administrators and faculty. Students may rotate out of SGA, graduate, become consumed with classwork, or lose interest. This means that you will have to frequently re-engage with new students to keep partnerships going. One way to do this is to invite SGA or student representatives to serve on grant application review committees. If you make a major announcement, release news, or produce a report on the initiative, forward it to the student groups with a note about why it is important to them. Include students in the planning of OER events and be sure to send them a special, personalized invite where appropriate. Connect with new officers following every election. Set up meetings with the new SGA officers to review their successful OER election platform and see how it aligns with your goals. There is no guarantee that students will share the goals of your initiative, but informing them of your efforts will at least allow them to make educated decisions about their future strategies.

Students may be OER advocates in other ways as well. Students who have used OER in the classroom can be featured in promotional content about OER, encourage other students to enroll in OER courses, and encourage faculty to use OER in other classes. Students are able to provide classroom feedback about OER resources used in a course in student teacher evaluations. Some faculty are enlisting students to become co-authors on collaborative OER as alternatives to traditional “throwaway assignments” (Wiley, 2013). When coordinating student contributions to OER projects consider copyright and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.

Students are often integrated with OER initiatives at many levels, from SGA to taking an OER course. Making them a partner instead of just a participant can have lasting impacts. Students can provide advocacy, funding, feedback, and much more; just ask.

Faculty Support Offices

If faculty partners are an essential key to the success of an OER initiative, then faculty support offices can be the key to faculty participation. This broad category of stakeholders may include instructional designers, educational technology specialists, teaching and learning centers, accessibility experts, or other administrative and professional specialists. Faculty support can also encompass institution-wide committees, centers, or projects focused on particular issues, like digital humanities/digital scholarship, big data, or community engagement. The exact constellation of resources, people, and organizations often varies by institution—GVSU’s instructional designers, for example, are part of the information technology (IT) department, while at UMass Amherst instructional designers are employed by both IT and the teaching and learning center. In any context, however, these stakeholders are united by a shared focus on supporting the scholarly and pedagogical practices of faculty members, through professional development programming, grant funds, consultations, and other services. As a result, faculty support offices—whatever form they take—have broadly similar motivations, face some of the same obstacles, and bring similar benefits as an OER partner.

Faculty support offices, more than many campus stakeholders, reflect and help to realize their institution’s strategic priorities: a research-driven institution may have more services and support to help researchers compete for grant funding, while GVSU’s instructional design and technology specialists, for example, enable progress towards the university’s goal of increased online course offerings. By linking OER with the priorities and values of your institution, you can frame OER engagement as an opportunity for faculty support offices to be more effective and successful. Strategic documents, vision statements, and institutional culture can reveal key values and concepts—innovation, sustainability, equity, student success, recognition, research impact, competitive rankings, and more—which offer an entry point to recruit these partners. With some critical and cre-

ative thought, you could pitch OER to faculty support offices as an engaging pedagogical practice, a more sustainable approach to textbooks, an opportunity to make higher education more equitable and affordable, or an innovative form of scholarship with global reach. By doing so, you position OER engagement as something that advances the partner's own goals, instead of diverting resources from core services.

Other OER narratives have more universal appeal, like the growing body of research surveyed by John Hilton (2016) which suggests that, beyond affordability, OER adoption leads to similar or better student learning outcomes compared to traditional textbooks. Perhaps the simplest reason for faculty support offices to join an OER initiative is if faculty begin asking them for OER-related support. For example, grant management offices may see more OER needs due to the U.S. Department of Education's recent policy requiring open licenses of educational resources produced through Department of Education grants (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). Participation in an OER initiative can thus enable faculty support offices to address emerging needs and connect the faculty they serve with other campus resources.

Recruiting faculty support offices for an OER initiative can be challenging, of course. These stakeholders probably have far more opportunities for collaboration on campus than resources to meet every request, especially if they award grant funding. OER-related grants or new services may come at the cost of other grants and services, and may be preempted by higher-profile or higher-priority needs (hence the value of positioning OER as a path towards a support office's core mission). If your institution's faculty support offices are not well informed about OER, it may take sustained relationship building and information sharing before they are ready to be enthusiastic OER allies: GVSU's OER collaboration with faculty support offices only occurred after several years of communication and groundwork. Even faculty support offices that are informed and engaged OER partners face a continual learning curve as the theory, praxis, and communities around OER emerge and evolve. As always, ongoing outreach and information sharing are essential to breaking down silos, continuing existing partnerships, and welcoming new parties to the OER conversation.

Once on board with an OER initiative, faculty support offices can be tremendously valuable allies: their relationships with and services for fac-

ulty provide additional conduits to the stakeholders ultimately responsible for adopting and creating OER. The connections that faculty support offices build in the course of their normal activities offer a ready audience for OER promotion and education, while also raising the profile of OER projects among faculty. The GVSU grants office has systems in place to support scholarly and creative activities, whether through funding, a lighter teaching load, or sabbaticals, and faculty across campus are keenly aware of these advantageous resources; by explicitly including OER as a supportable activity, the office raises the profile of OER-as-scholarship at the same time as directly empowering faculty OER creation.

With practical expertise and dedicated programming on instructional design, educational technology, or grant management, faculty support offices allow an OER initiative to provide more, better, and faster support than a library could offer on its own. At both K-State and GVSU, faculty support specialists regularly help faculty develop online courses, create digital learning materials, or work with learning management systems. This assistance generates excellent opportunities to highlight the benefits of OER, encourage open licenses on faculty-created materials, and inspire faculty exploration of OER-enabled practices.

Faculty support offices can both amplify OER awareness efforts and directly assist faculty OER engagement through existing resources or services, especially if you have successfully framed OER as an aspect of effective teaching, innovative scholarship, or other priorities. With high demand on these offices, it is important to locate their strategic priorities and tie OER into those areas.

Administration and Foundation

Senior administration and foundation offices can be challenging and sometimes intimidating to approach, but are exceptionally valuable partners in an OER initiative. Presidents' and provosts' offices represent both prestige and direct financial resources, while a foundation, alumni center, development office, or other fundraising arm could be a conduit to external funding and influential community members. Compared to other stakeholders in this chapter, administration and foundation offices are less likely to be aware of OER and will have substantially more high-profile demands on their time and resources. Persistent engagement and ongoing

education are essential early steps: take the time to invite these leaders to OER events or activities and share great things happening in OER both locally and nationally. Universities have also employed the competitive spirit of showing off regional rivals' figures and highlights to entice their leaders to act. The height of the football season, or whichever sport is popular on campus, may be a great time to send this communication.

K-State received minimal support from these areas for the first year or two, but once we were able to engage the leaders in OER, show the local return on investment, and provide evidence of the strong student and faculty support, they were easily brought on board. In fact, the previous president of K-State, Kirk Schultz, participated in marketing, fully supported the open/alternative student fee, and brought our initiative to his new university. Which brings us to the point that, like students and faculty partners, administrative partners will also have turnover and it is important to actively engage with each new member. The major hook for getting these players on board is the ability to market the vast student savings with communications and marketing promotions. K-State's Foundation Office interest was piqued after seeing donor reactions to the initiative. Administration at K-State has provided substantial funding to the OER initiative since the first year, and now actively seeks new donors to K-State's Open/Alternative Textbook Initiative.

Although difficult to engage at first, administration at your institution can bring a high-level spotlight on your initiative. This light will make your efforts visible to a wider audience. Use this wisely and you can increase your impact even further.

Campus Bookstores

"But what about the bookstore?" It's a common question in OER conversations, and an understandable one. Free online textbooks can seem like a direct threat to the business of bookstores, but bookstores—whether independent, university-owned, or vendor-managed—can be beneficial stakeholders for an OER initiative. Depending on your context and the bookstore's willingness to engage, you may seek to enlist the bookstore as an active partner, soothe concerns from the bookstore or their stakeholders, or simply keep the bookstore's staff informed and in the loop.

Strategies that work for enlisting other campus partners are effective at engaging the bookstore, too. For GVSU's university-run bookstore, involvement with OER is a way to advance the university's student-centric mission and values. For externally-run bookstores, meanwhile, OER engagement can be an opportunity to generate goodwill with students or with the vendor's contractual partners at the institution. At UMass Amherst, the transition to Amazon as the campus bookstore in 2016 gave the library an opportunity to push for the surfacing of OER content and to receive valuable data on assigned class materials. This was mostly due to the library having representation on the team that selected Amazon as the new campus vendor.

OER can also generate new sales opportunities: a GVSU bookstore manager noted that if they sold fewer textbooks, they'd have more space for technology and for university-branded merchandise (both of these sales opportunities offer higher profit margins than the competitive textbook market that is currently taking up this space). A bookstore may remain able to sell physical OER materials, from the traditionally published OpenStax print textbooks to print shop or print-on-demand copies of OER (depending on the licensing). In 2016–17, GVSU's bookstore sold physical books to more than 10 percent of students enrolled in a course that adopted an OpenStax book, even though the book was freely available online.

In many cases, recruiting a bookstore as an OER ally may be more challenging than other stakeholders. It is important to note that some bookstores' contracts with the college or university may have strict policies (in which case, you may want to target the institutional contract-holder as a potential OER ally). If a bookstore is expected to be a revenue source for the university or for student government, the store's financial concerns about OER could inspire concern from university or student leaders. This presents an opportunity to emphasize the financial benefits of OER to those leaders and explore alternative revenue sources to reduce dependence on textbook sales. A bookstore that is already facing difficulties with the evolving textbook market might see an OER initiative as the most immediate, visible cause of their financial trouble: a formerly independent bookstore for K-State knew online competition had hurt sales, but also blamed the university's OER projects for financial difficulties. Early and on-

going outreach to the bookstore and its own stakeholders can be helpful in identifying obstacles like these and deciding how—or whether—to address them. In some cases, the best approach may simply be sharing information in good faith and keeping a door open for bookstore engagement while you focus on other partners. Ideally, however, the bookstore will benefit from engaging at some level with an OER program, even if that engagement is preparing for a future with decreased textbook sales.

Bookstores' relationships with students and faculty are valuable assets for their business that can similarly benefit an OER program. Whether independent, institution-run, or vendor-managed, bookstores communicate regularly with faculty to explore options for course materials and liaise with publishers or vendors. These relationships are an opportunity to present OER as one of many options for course materials and to connect faculty with other OER support at their point of need. By facilitating the adoption of an OpenStax textbook for the chemistry department, GVSU's bookstore strengthened their relationship with the department while simultaneously enabling an OER adoption that affected more than 1,700 students in the 2016–17 academic year. Some bookstores are becoming active partners in OER: bookstore management company Follet recently launched a collaboration with OER service vendor Lumen Learning (Follet, 2017), and while Follet and Lumen benefit from new revenue streams, institutions with Follet bookstores will benefit from new resources to support faculty OER adoptions. Bookstores have similarly high-value connections to students, which can help raise the profile of OER and the faculty who have adopted OER.

A bookstore's network of relationships and role as a hub of textbook activity also makes them an unparalleled source of data on course material use and practices. The data they collect in the course of normal operations—faculty selecting materials to assign or deciding not to require any texts, student purchasing behaviors, specific cost data—could be a treasure trove for an OER initiative. GVSU's OER program is beginning to explore the potential of bookstore data for both outreach opportunities and for more accurately estimating the monetary impact of OER adoptions. UMass Amherst is using data from Amazon to begin an experimental textbook affordability program in the Acquisitions and Reserves departments.

After reading this, you are probably still wondering “But what about the bookstore?” Ultimately, that’s a question only you can answer for your own institutional context, but in many cases advocating for OER may not prevent a rewarding collaboration with the campus stakeholder who sells textbooks. There are advantages that can be gained on both sides when this partnership is successful. Begin with information sharing and see where this partner is willing to go from there.

External Partners

For the purposes of this chapter, we define external partners as anyone outside of the college or university governance structure and alumni community. Many of these we briefly describe below are library-centric and some may require a fee for different levels of participation. However, we encourage you to look for OER partners in any institutional connection, whether or not they currently have an OER focus or library relationship. Your community and institutional context undoubtedly contains other distinctive organizations that could be valuable allies.

OER Communities

The professional and practice communities that have emerged around OER communities are usually pretty “open” and welcoming, so becoming a part of the community is rather easy. That being said, several of the communities do require a fee to participate in depth. Some of these communities still provide resources to the general public, but the “good stuff” is members-only or behind a sign-in. An OER community can be a valuable source of information, provide opportunities for partnership on OER or research, and offer colleagues to lean on with your challenges and celebrate your successes.

The Open Textbook Network (n.d.-a) is a nonprofit organization of libraries and universities supporting the use and creation of OER. This support includes the Open Textbook Library, a portal for finding high-quality OER with publicly posted reviews by faculty members, which is open to any and all users. Membership in the Open Textbook Network itself brings further benefits, including professional development events as well as resources for creating and remixing OER (n.d.-b). Membership in the Open Textbook Network offers outside legitimacy for OER efforts, valuable training to empower OER allies, and access to an engaged com-

munity of OER users and creators—benefits that have made the Open Textbook Network a worthwhile partner for OER programs at K-State and UMass Amherst.

OpenStax (n.d.-a), a nonprofit textbook publisher affiliated with Rice University, is an easy entry point into OER for many instructors, but also a potential partner for an OER initiative. Beyond their high-quality open textbooks and supporting resources, OpenStax (n.d.-b) offers a grant-supported institutional partnership program for institutions interested in rapidly expanding the use of OER on their campus. This program, open to new applicants annually, includes professional development, strategy guidance, and community support for OER adoption programs. Although the extensive OpenStax library often plays a central role in partners' efforts, the program supports adoption of any OER.

Scholarly, professional, and advocacy organizations, in addition to state and regional associations, have thriving networks of librarians and instructors engaged in OER practices. OER-focused sessions are increasingly common in conferences focused on academic libraries, educational technology, and instruction, not to mention the annual Open Education Conference. The events and communities facilitated by organizations like SPARC (the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition, <https://sparcopen.org/>), the Library Publishing Coalition (<https://www.librarypublishing.org/>), and the Association of College & Research Libraries (<http://ala.org/acrl/>) make these groups valuable as informal partners, allowing your OER initiative to connect to other communities of practice, share ideas and information, collaborate, and innovate.

Of particular note are community college organizations and associations, no matter your institution type. Community colleges are among the leading OER innovators, from the “Z-Degree” pioneered by Tidewater Community College (Wiley, Williams, DeMarte, & Hilton, 2016) to Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges' Open Washington initiative (2017), and can be an inspirational partner as you grow your OER program. On a regional level, GVSU's OER initiative benefits from connections with enthusiastic OER champions at Michigan community colleges who have organized public events and shared information resources focused on OER. The Community College Consortium for Open Educational Resources (CCCOER) is a national organization with

a lively community of practice around OER (<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/cccoer-advisory>) where participants can share their successes and failures and benefit from cross-institutional support.

Commercial OER Service Providers

A myriad of commercial services have emerged in response to increasing attention to OER at colleges and universities. Companies like Lumen Learning, PanOpen, bepress, and Pressbooks typically provide tools, expertise, or platforms that make it easier for instructors to adopt, use, and create OER. For example, Lumen Learning's suite of services includes assessment instruments, student learning aids, and course design support, while Pressbooks' open source publishing platform supports user-friendly book creation. These commercial partners can provide an OER initiative with immediate, scalable support for faculty instructors, thereby making OER adoption easier and more appealing.

The Digital Commons platform from bepress enabled GVSU's library to begin publishing faculty-created OER in 2012 with minimal additional staff time and money. However, this example highlights a potential problem with commercial partners, beyond the obvious cost consideration: bepress' acquisition by mega-publisher Elsevier in 2017 refreshed concerns among many institutions and organizations over the implications and consequences of scholarly infrastructures controlled by profit-driven organizations (Joseph & Shearer, 2017; Schonfeld, 2017).

Government Offices

Local and regional governments—and the members of the public whom they serve—are practical stakeholders and potentially transformative allies in an OER initiative. Arguments in favor of OER can appeal across the political spectrum, from innovative pedagogy and equitable access to knowledge, to college affordability and efficient use of taxpayer dollars (given Senack and Donoghue's 2016 estimate that every year, U.S. students spend \$3 billion of government-subsidized financial aid on textbooks). In return, government partners might be a source of additional funding, can raise the profile and legitimacy of OER, and can influence the priorities of publicly funded colleges and universities.

The #GoOpen program developed by the U.S. Department of Education, and adopted by a growing number of state Departments of Education,

focuses on OER in K–12 education (Leu, 2017). Even so, post-secondary OER programs can benefit from making connections with their state’s #GoOpen project, building relationships with a broader educational community and sharing OER expertise. Institutions with teacher education programs can also use #GoOpen engagement as an entry point into conversations with the institution’s education faculty. In the long run, K–12 OER adoptions may change students’ and parents’ expectations for post-secondary institutions, providing additional pressure in favor of OER.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, we have highlighted stakeholders with significant potential as allies in an OER program, based on experiences at GVSU, UMass Amherst, and K-State. Although in many cases our individual relationships with these partners formed organically or opportunistically, exploring these partnerships through the framework of motivations, challenges, and benefits is a useful model for any form of advocacy, as well as a template for building partnerships from scratch. Any goal is easier to achieve when the people and organizations involved are united by common ground, yet motivated to participate by their own reasons, values and priorities.

If you are involved in an OER program, your work with partners and potential allies will undoubtedly be different, dependent as each stakeholder is on your individual institution’s context. Your institution’s mission and goals, demographics, internal and external pressures, and the individual people who make up any organization create an environment that you can and should approach on its own terms.

As a result, it is natural that different OER initiatives will have different definitions of what makes a successful collaboration. Even in the three institutions represented in this article, the authors’ OER programs have developed along unique paths with different goals. GVSU’s OER partnerships mostly involve building awareness of OER across campus and keeping OER in the forefront of partners’ existing services and conversations. Success in this collaboration has led to more workshops and professional development opportunities around OER, growing faculty interest in OER creation, and a network of supportive stakeholders potentially positioned to support new activities or resources for OER. At K-State,

partners have made their program grow from a pilot OER grant project enabled by students and the libraries to collaborations with administrative offices to both expand the program and develop long-term funding from external donors. Those partnerships are continuing to generate high-impact collaborations with faculty OER creators and sustainable funding for new projects. And at UMass Amherst, successful collaboration has meant more funding, sharing the burden of promoting and supporting our OER program, and increased awareness across campus.

Regardless of what success means for your context and your program right now, a wide network of partners can help you achieve and advance beyond that success. OER initiatives can require a significant investment of time and resources, but they are a rare and exciting opportunity for stakeholders across an institution to collaborate on an issue because the collaboration benefits every stakeholder's own mission.

Hewlett Foundation President Larry Kramer (2015) wrote that, "No brainers' are incredibly rare in education, where strongly held, widely disparate values all too often stymie potential reforms. Well, OER is a no brainer." We would argue that building partnerships for OER programs is an equal no brainer. An OER initiative may begin as a small collaboration with an individual faculty member or department. Undoubtedly, a well-resourced and focused library could develop and implement an entire program of OER advocacy and support on its own, if it wanted to devote the necessary resources. So too could many of the stakeholders we describe, and of course individual faculty have been creating and using OER since before OER was a common term. Maybe you can go it alone on an OER initiative, but since working with partners can help your initiative advance faster, reach farther, and be more efficient, why would you want to?

This chapter outlines several partners the authors have worked with and can be a starting point for potential collaborators for your OER initiative. Remember that each campus is unique; some partnerships work better on certain campuses, and even if you engaged a partner once and it was not successful, there may yet be an opportunity for successful collaboration in the future. Finding the partner's hook, incorporating their needs, and recognizing the value that they bring to the table will carry your OER partnership into the future and hopefully on to new programs too.

List of Partners

Internal (University/College/Campus)

Library Partners: Scholarly Communications Department, Academic Department Liaisons

Reference Staff: Library Administrators, Student Support, Library Development Office—Friends of the Library

Reserves Department

University Archives

Special Collections

Metadata and Acquisitions

Library Fiscal Staff

Faculty: Classroom Faculty, Research Faculty

Department Heads

Students: Student Government Association

Faculty Support Offices: Teaching and Learning Centers, Instructional Designer, IT

Educational Technology

Accessibility Services

Professional Development Programming

Internal and External Grant Fund Management

Administration & Foundation: President, Provost, Foundation

Alumni

Campus Bookstore

External

OER Communities

OER Commercial Services

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