

# Report to the Content Creation and Dissemination Team

## OER Exploration Working Group

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### Group Members:

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### Summary

This report discusses the results of the Open Educational Resources (OER) Exploration Working Group online survey. The OER Exploration Group conducted an environmental scan to discover OER projects across the Alliance and identify what role(s), if any, the Alliance might play in regards to OER. The goal of the survey was to gauge the overall awareness of OER expertise and provide an understanding of issues with their creation and management on the Alliance level. Twenty-nine out of thirty-nine institutions responded to the survey.

We found that forty-eight percent of the responding institutions are making efforts to create OER, one third of responding institutions are members of the Open Textbook Network, and fifteen percent of responding institutions are working with a university press to create OER.

### Recommendations

We recommend that the Alliance take an active role in OER collection, creation, and management. This would include:

- Provide trainings/workshops in two tracks: an introductory level and a master level.
- Use Primo as the main discovery tool for OER in the Alliance
- Create an OER Group that would work towards creating sustainable programs including:
  - Mentorship
  - Workshops and training
  - In-depth environmental scanning through surveys focusing on students and faculty at each institution
- Investigate joining the Open Textbook Network and work to support the OTN in other ways.

### Introduction/Methods

As part of the Content Creation and Dissemination Team, the OER Exploration Working Group was charged to: “Explore possible Alliance role(s) in creation, discovery, and access to Open Educational Resources (OER)s, including e-textbooks. Create a report for CCD that succinctly defines OERs; the issues with their creation and management; locating quality OERs for educational use; and what role(s), if any, the Alliance might play. Closely coordinate with group associated with the Alliance Professional Development Award on OERs.”

The OER Exploration Working Group created an online survey that was sent out to Content Creation and Dissemination (CCD) Representatives at all of the thirty-seven Alliance institutions. The survey was conducted online and open between May 27, 2016 to June 10, 2016. During those nineteen days it collected twenty-nine responses. The aim was to not only understand the various OER projects and initiatives going on at Alliance institutions but to also try to identify what what role(s), if any, the Alliance might play in regards to OER.

## **What are Open Educational Resources (OER) and What is Happening in the Alliance**

Open Education Resources (OER) are becoming increasingly important on academic campuses as a way to support student learning and the affordability of higher education. The term Open Educational Resources is understood differently by the diverse communities and stakeholders involved. UNESCO defines OER as “any type of educational materials that are in the public domain or introduced with an open license. The nature of these open materials means that anyone can legally and freely copy, use, adapt and re-share them.”<sup>1</sup>

While library publishing programs are becoming more commonplace, the creation of OER is just beginning to take shape. There are opportunities for libraries to become more involved in the publication of OER through their own publishing structures and open textbook publishing initiatives can prove critical in lowering the cost of education.

In addition to several open textbook and OER initiatives at various institutions in the Alliance, there are also several projects happening that are supported by the Alliance. One project is an OER focused Professional Development Grant, which is working to educate Alliance members about OER with a series of educational webinars, explore an open textbook review system, and to increase communication, collaboration, and advocacy for OER initiatives. Additionally, a group of Alliance members is applying to participate in the Scholarly Communication Institute in 2017 (<http://triangleosci.org/>).

## **What Role Could the Alliance Play in Supporting OER?**

Forty-four percent of participants reported that they would like to see the Alliance provide grants to faculty and thirty-two percent suggested that the Alliance join the Open Textbook Network. Thirty six percent of respondents would like the Alliance to offer training / workshops on copyright and the process of creating OER textbooks would be helpful.

We encourage the Alliance to take a more active role in supporting OER initiatives.

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<sup>1</sup> [UNESCO](#)

## Appendix

### Comments From Survey Participants

- Develop some kind of assessment measures – what are the success metrics for any OER that are published and success metrics for OER initiatives more broadly
- Create its own Open Textbook Network, providing a web platform for browsing open resources, the structure for peer review, copy-editing and publishing, and support. One of the main issues around OER right now is how difficult they are to find online. There are a few great libraries, but no real comprehensive source for information. I would love if the Alliance became a leader regionally in OER, providing funding and support.
- I think the biggest challenges we're encountering right now is the need to pay faculty or provide course release both for adopting and creating OER. For adoption: It's not as easy as choosing an existing open textbook and adopting it. There are often ancillary materials that were provided that have to be replaced, and also it takes time to change the content of the course. For authoring: creating a new open textbook takes time for the author, and then there are all the parts of the publishing process (editing, peer review, typesetting, etc) that aren't free. If the Alliance is interested in supporting adoption, I think grants for faculty would be a good way to go. If the Alliance is interested in supporting OER publication, talk with the OTN about whether there is a way for the Alliance to support that effort
- Alliance OER efforts should take into account the variety of academic needs. For example, needs of students at community colleges differ from needs of students at research institutions
- I'm really interested in OERs and am looking forward to learning more and working with faculty. It's only one small part of my job, though, so I want to learn how to involve many campus partners so we can all work together.
- We really need a local temperature check to get a sense for faculty exposure to this concept and potential interest - but, this isn't necessarily something the library has the staffing to take on
- This kind of a team (building an OER collection) would be a nice contrast to most of the other Alliance teams, which tend to focus heavily on tech services rather than public services. I think this sort of an endeavor could potentially draw from a largely untapped group of librarians throughout the Alliance!