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OER Awareness, Advocacy, and Adoption: An Institutional Approach

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Introduction

Sacred Heart University's Open Educational Resources (OER) Task Force, an entity composed of the Office of the Provost, the Office of Digital Learning (ODL), Sacred Heart University Library, and faculty from across campus, has worked for the past two years to integrate OER into the educational culture of the university. To accomplish this we've employed a process that focuses on building awareness, identifying campus units for building strategic partnerships, assisting faculty in locating relevant resources, and, through pilot programs, onboarding OER into courses for trial.

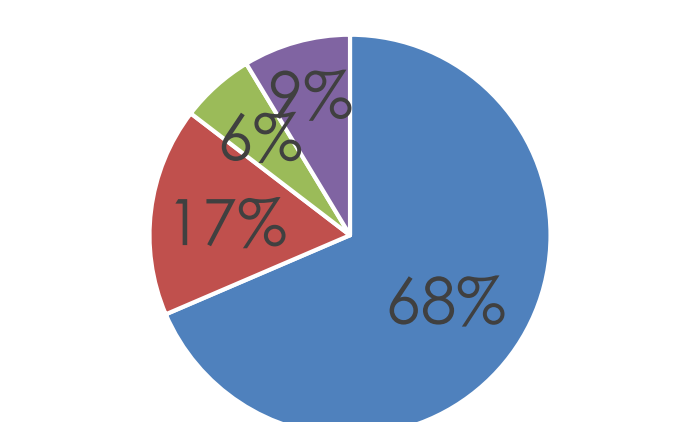
Strategic Approach

- **OER Task Force:** collaborative team, composed of the Office of the Provost, the Office of Digital Learning, Sacred Heart University Library, and faculty from across campus
- **Process Mechanisms:** focus on building awareness, identifying campus units for strategic partnerships, assisting faculty in locating relevant resources, and, through pilot programs, onboarding OER into courses for trial
- **Survey Faculty:** gain a better understanding of what types of materials our faculty uses.
- **Policies and Incentives:** create clear policies that allow the task force to remain consistent with our message. The incentive program is important to promote and reward the efforts of reviewers and adopters of open textbooks.

Faculty Survey

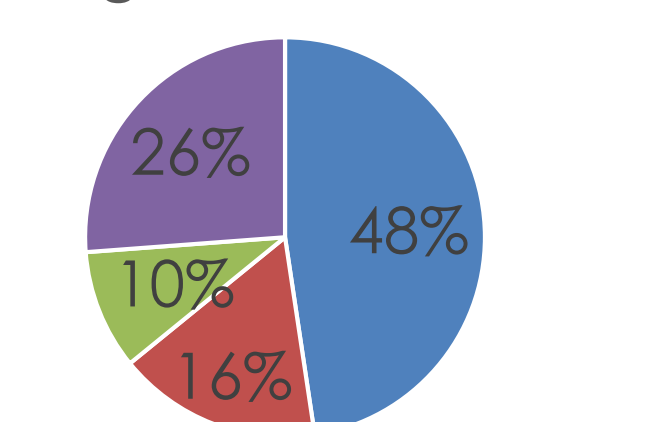
A survey administered to faculty, as part of our early work in formulating strategies for building awareness of OER across campus, revealed some interesting trends in existing use of print and digital classroom materials. Of the 144 faculty respondents, we were able to deduce a clear need to build awareness of the availability of openly licensed content, educate on creative commons licensing, and assist in helping faculty to identify the licensing rights attached to classroom materials.

Print Materials



- Copyright
- Public Domain
- Creative Commons
- Don't know/Other

Digital Materials



- Copyrighted
- Public Domain
- Creative Commons
- Don't know/Other

Building Awareness

- **Workshops & Webinars:** focus of these information sessions is on awareness building, access to resources and familiarity with the initiative.
- **Individual and Small Group Consultations:** sessions where we consider the needs of one or more faculty members and their courses, followed by assistance in finding relevant OER, such as open textbooks
- **Department Meetings:** present at departmental meetings to share the potential benefits of OER and discuss review and adoption incentives.
- **Website:** showcases materials and the work of the OER Initiative

Identifying & Creating Relevant Resources

- **Open Textbook List:** this list is a mix of both OER and open access books relevant to disciplines taught at SHU, compiled and published at DigitalCommons@SHU
- **Open Learning Modules for Self-Directed Learning:** At completion, the modules will include videos, suggested readings, quizzes, and resource materials for further information on topics relating to OER
- **Generating Open Materials Lists for Specific Courses in Consultation with Faculty:** course specific OER lists based on syllabi and conversations with faculty

Piloting OER

Stages of Implementation

1. Identify: find and select OER for faculty review
2. Review: faculty work in groups of three to complete a formal review of selected OER
3. Pilot: after review and approval, OER is piloted in course section(s)
4. Scale Up: focus on scaling OER to other sections of the course or department-wide adoption

Math Case Study

Openstax *Precalculus* and *College Algebra* Pilot, Spring 2017

- Instructional design: minimal changes to course, a one-for-one textbook swap
- Online homework: changed from MyMathLab to xyzHomework
- Impact on student learning : grades for spring 2017 comparable to spring 2016

Cost Savings

Breakdown of Student Textbook Usage:

- **70.3%** (72 students) free version
- **26.4%** (27 students) print version
- **3.3%** (3 students) other/neither

Using OpenStax digital and print textbooks, overall student costs were roughly **\$1,485.00**, based on the average cost of the two textbooks (*Precalculus* and *College Algebra*)

VERSUS

Using the previous textbook in the spring of 2016, the 90 registered students (assuming students had purchased the textbook) had combined textbook costs of roughly **\$15,506.37**, based on average university bookstore prices

xyzHomework cost = **\$40** / each student

VERSUS

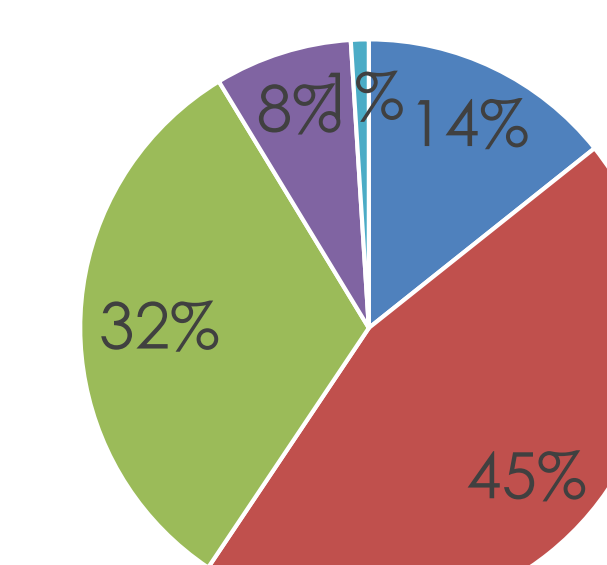
*MyMathLab = about **\$100** / each student

*Access code with NEW textbook only

Student Survey

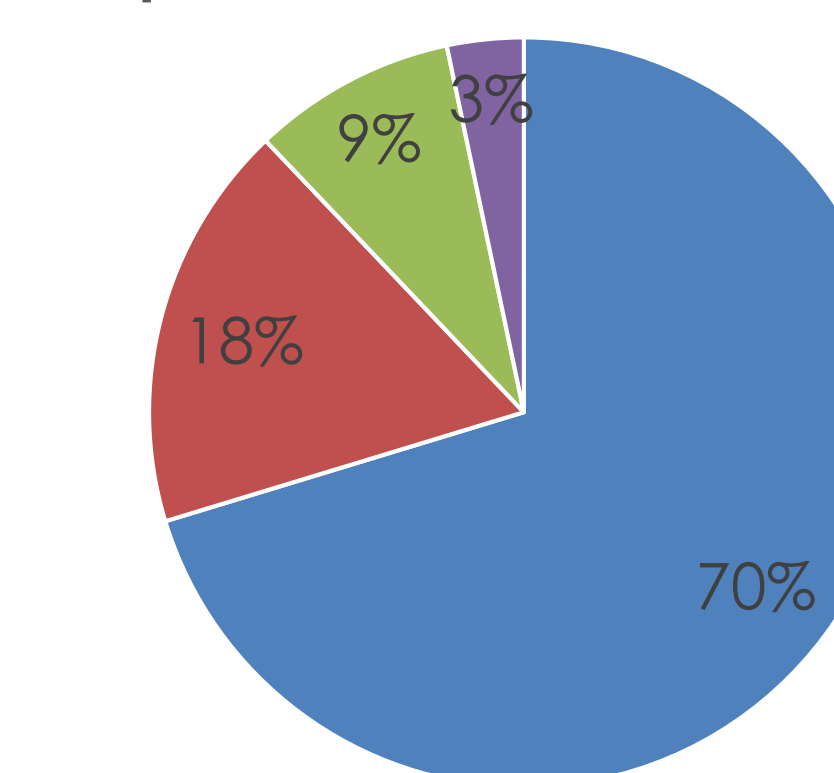
A survey administered at the conclusion of the spring 2017 semester to students enrolled in the pilot sections for precalculus and college algebra. Answers from the 91 respondents revealed that the vast majority of students ranged from strong to neutral agreement that the Openstax texts used in their classes helped them to learn course content. Additionally, it was revealed that the vast majority of students used the free digital editions of the Openstax texts, rather than purchasing print copies.

Open Textbook Helped Me Learn Course Content



- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree

Open Textbook Format Used



- Free Digital
- Purchased Print
- Both
- Other

Conclusions

Challenges

- Increasing faculty participation in workshops and webinars
- Overcoming faculty bias against open materials
- Limited staff time for working on the initiative

Opportunities

- Initiative has opened up avenues for collaboration with a number of campus units
- The growth of institutional knowledge about OER has fueled demand for specific information about open materials for courses taught across the disciplinary spectrum

Moving Forward

- Work with programs to create OER materials that can be a benefit to Sacred Heart and the wider academic community
- Advocate for use of open pedagogical practices