OpenOKState Student Fellows

OPENOKSTATE STUDENT FELLOWS

KATHY ESSMILLER

Oklahoma State University Libraries
Stillwater, OK

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OPENOKSTATE STUDENT FELLOWS

The statements below describe the learning goals associated with this micro-course. They might be helpful, and they might be horribly dull. Read them if you want. Definitely read the stuff after the course objectives. I worked hard on it, and it says nice stuff about you. ~KE

In this micro-course you will

- Discover how the use of open educational resources can improve lives by reducing the cost of university education, enhancing academic freedom, and increasing access to teaching, learning and research opportunities.
- Explore how the use of open educational resources aligns with the Oklahoma State University mission.
- Identify ways to share student experiences and partner with others to articulate achievable actions that build community, further knowledge, and advance open and affordable resource solutions.

Students,

You've got a lot going on, and you're doing it. Your energy, your dedication to making this a better world, you are amazing. Your faculty and professors admire you too, and they are trying to do whatever they can to help support your success. They know that it is frustrating to spend a bunch of money on textbooks that are seldom used in class or required only for homework. They realize that representation matters, and that many, many people in our community do not see themselves in the textbooks we require you purchase. They know that what drives you to explore and learn has nuances unique to your lived experiences, and that 'one-size-fits-all' instructional experiences are frequently actually 'one-size-fits-hardly-anyone' or 'one-size-fits-people-life-already-works-for'.

They are trying to fix this by shifting to teaching and learning resources that you do not have to purchase. They are finding and creating resources that reflect you and your communities. They are crafting instructional designs which can be modified to address and help give life to your goals and what you know to be true. They

want your time in their course to be the transformational university experience you have been told you can expect at OSU.

Your voices matter . As university administration becomes aware of your appreciation for faculty engaged in this work, they will be able to justify allocating more resources to supporting faculty doing this work. The result will be even more courses which don't require you to purchase a textbook, and even more faculty empowered to discard the traditional, commercial educational resources which frequently act as a barrier to innovation in teaching and learning. My gig is to help support this shift. At the end of this micro-course, you will have the opportunity to help influence this campaign by sharing your story, evaluating course materials, or volunteering to help raise awareness.

Thank you for taking the time to learn about open, and thank you for sharing your voice. ~Kathy

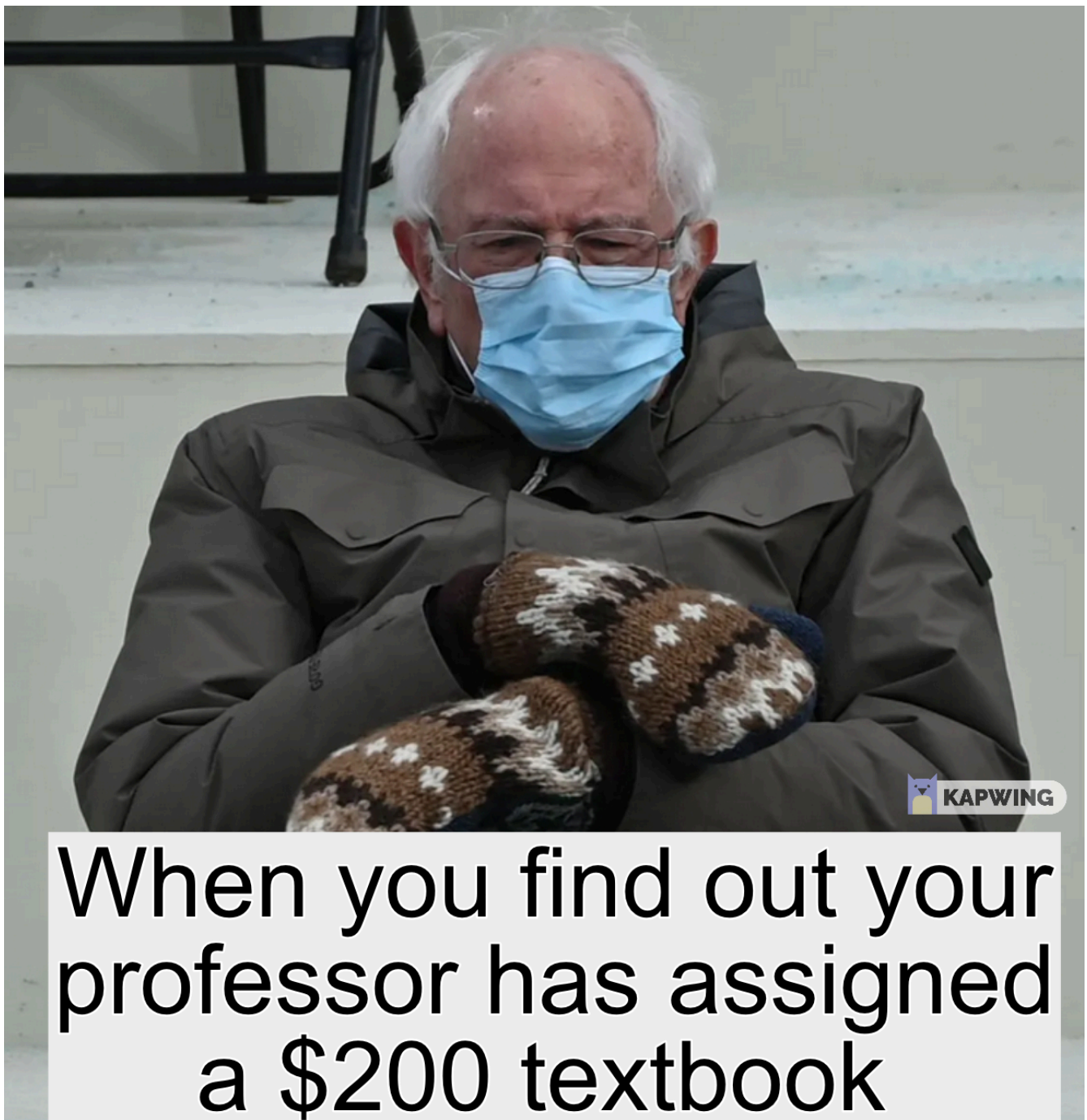*Updated 3.4.2024, kathy.essmiller@okstate.edu*

OER 101

3 min. read

Open educational resources (OER) are teaching, learning and research materials intentionally created and licensed to encourage distribution, modification, and retention. Resources may be in the form of textbooks, multimedia, full courseware, and more.

Use of OER increases affordability of and access to educational experiences. It also encourages faculty experimentation with innovative pedagogies, and centers faculty expertise and scholarship.

The use of OER can improve lives by reducing the cost of university education, enhancing academic freedom, and increasing access to teaching, learning and research opportunities.

When you find out your professor has assigned a $200 textbook

In short:

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

https://open.library.okstate.edu/studentvoice/?p=5#h5p-1

Why Does This Matter?

A recent study found that at least 89% of undergraduate students report increased stress levels due to textbook costs (Jenkins et al., 2020). In order to cope with textbook costs, that same study shared that over 60% of the students reported not purchasing the required text, with 30% of students doing so even when they know it will hurt their grade.

Students who cope with textbook costs by taking fewer courses each semester take longer to finish their degrees, and many avoid specific courses or even change majors because of the cost of textbooks. You have no doubt had your own experiences with this, or know others who have. The wheel below is populated based on the findings described above. Give it a spin.

I always think maybe it is broken, because negative outcomes come up so often. But it isn't. That's really what things are like for a lot of people. But you know that, you are living it, you don't need me to tell you.

> *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://open.library.okstate.edu/studentvoice/?p=5*

College is expensive, and that makes it less accessible for many. Major expense categories for students include tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, personal expenses, and transportation (OEN, 2021). Since books and supplies are not the highest cost leading to these affordability issues, you might ask, "why are we talking about this one?". Here's why.

Books and supplies are one cost that faculty can directly impact. Academic freedom means that faculty, for the most part, have the agency to choose whatever resources they feel will create the best learning, teaching, and research environment for their students. Additionally, the cost of books and supplies has a disproportionate impact of the academic success of students. It makes hard things even more difficult. If we can fix that, we should.

> Very expensive and only used for the paper. Unnecessary.

I opened the $200 textbook once. Exam questions were lifted directly from his own PowerPoints. There was no need to read the book because all of the answers were in his slideshows. I wish I had known we wouldn't be using this very expensive textbook.

Glad we didn't need one. Those things are expensive.

What Would You Say?

Do the student statements shared above seem familiar? Click on the Padlet below (or scan the QR code to navigate to the Padlet on another device) and share your thoughts about textbook costs. After that, read on to learn how OSU Libraries and OpenOKState are partnering with others to help reduce textbook costs.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://open.library.okstate.edu/studentvoice/?p=5

Made with **padlet**

Scan this QR code to access the Padlet and chat about textbook costs.

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OPENOKSTATE

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3 min. read

In response to the nationally documented impact the cost of commercial textbooks has on the personal lives and academic progress of university students, the Oklahoma State University Libraries created the OpenOKState open educational resources program. The OpenOKState program provides faculty stipends, instructional design support, advocacy and education to facilitate collaboration and innovation among OSU faculty, instructors, administrators and students working to increase access to meaningful teaching, learning, and research resources and experiences.

Contributions to OER can also count as scholarly work for faculty being considered for tenure and promotion. Dr. Gary Sandefur, former Oklahoma State University provost, spoke in support of this, making OSU one of the first United States research institutions to do so. The video is about a minute long, and worth a watch.

> *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://open.library.okstate.edu/studentvoice/?p=57*

OSU and OER

One of the reasons Provost Sandefur supported faculty engagement with OER is because he viewed its use as very much in alignment with the mission of Oklahoma State University. The OSU Mission states that the University "promotes learning, advances knowledge, enriches lives, and stimulates economic development through teaching, research extension, outreach and creative activities."

Think back to what you read in the OER 101 chapter. In what ways do you think the use of OER aligns with the OSU mission statement? Add your observations to the Padlet below, building on our observations from the previous chapter.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://open.library.okstate.edu/studentvoice/?p=57

Made with **padlet**

Most definitely, having 89% of our students experiencing stress related to the cost of textbooks does not enrich lives, one of the goals stated in the OSU mission statement. Students having to choose majors based on whether or not they can afford to purchase the textbooks does little to promote learning or advance knowledge. On the other hand, the innovative pedagogy and creative scholarship which frequently emerges through the use of OER does contribute to productive teaching, research, outreach and creative activities.

How might you articulate the ways the creation and use of OER supports the goals outlined in our university mission statement? What would you add to the statements below? Can you create a statement that more accurately represents the student perspective?

"Open Educational Resources can help reduce student anxiety related to the cost of textbooks (Jenkins et al., 2020). Because OSU is committed to promoting learning through creation of effective learning environments, the OSU Library supports the creation and use of OER."

"The use of Open Educational Resource is a high impact strategy which can assist in addressing social justice issues (Jenkins et al., 2020). Because OSU is committed to access to knowledge creation across a diverse community, the OSU Library supports the creation and use of OER."

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://open.library.okstate.edu/studentvoice/?p=57#h5p-2

Measuring Impact

As of Spring 2024, classroom use of OpenOKState grant supported OER has saved OSU students over $2,600,000.00. Over 50 course modifications have been completed with support from OpenOKState

programs, and with the Fall 2022 implementation of OER for ENGL 1113 all incoming freshmen have the option of taking at least one course that does not require a textbook purchase.

At least 70 different OSU courses are no longer requiring textbook purchases. All sections of Technical Writing (ENGL 3323), Introduction to Speech Communications (SPCH 2173), and GRMN are using OER. Just those three courses add up to savings for over 800 students every single semester. With the Fall 2022 addition of Comp I, the number of students impacted by department-wide adoption of OER jumped to over 3500 students per semester.

Faculty and students from OSU are active in state-wide advocacy regarding the use of OER, sharing OSU experiences with colleges and universities throughout Oklahoma and beyond. OSU scholarship and research related to OER is being used to inform legislative efforts aimed to support OER, and OSU leads the way for the state in providing course markings which make it easier for students to identify and enroll in courses using OER.

Want to lend your voice? The next chapter provides a Call to Action and explores ways you might consider joining the movement.

"Building on its land-grant heritage, Oklahoma State University promotes learning, advances knowledge, enriches lives, and stimulates economic development through teaching, research, extension, outreach and creative activities." *~OSU Mission Statement, 2021*

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CALL TO ACTION

10 min. read

Hopefully you see that the voices of students impacted by textbook costs are actually being heard, and that administrators and faculty are trying to provide options other than just dealing with it and buying the textbook.

These efforts will be strengthened as students like you continue to share your stories and experiences. Those who participate in the conversation, those who take action–a little or a lot–will have a direct influence on the way education is conducted at OSU.

> "They are the game changers."   *~Patience Lightfoot, Campus Organizer, OpenOKState*

We appreciate the time you have taken to learn more about how OpenOKState is partnering with others to improve teaching, learning and research experiences at OSU. We are excited and grateful to have your efforts join those of the OpenOKState Student Advocacy team to amplify this movement. Through the opportunities below you can join your voice with that of other students to achieve change and advocate for accessible, meaningful learning experiences.

Evaluating Course Materials

Faculty and instructors may be unaware of how much the course materials they are requiring cost their students. In addition, they may not understand the impact of requiring homework to be completed in a commercial publisher's learning management system. Use the student checklist to tell us about the materials used in your courses and how they impact your learning experience here at OSU.

Student Checklist | Course Evaluating Course Materials

Textbooks in Real Life

It is helpful to hear from the student perspective how required textbook purchases impacts your experiences at the beginning of of the semester and throughout the school year. Do you end up having to juggle your budget?

Does financial aid cover the cost of the books? Are you able to tell when and if automatic charges hit your bursar? Sharing your story can help make a difference in the lives of OSU students.

One Next Step

The OpenOKState Student Advocacy Team has room for anyone who wants to join the movement to reduce the costs of textbooks at OSU. Complete the OER Call to Action form or reach out directly to one of the team members listed below. Thank you!

Patience Lightfoot, Community Outreach Coordinator, OpenOKState | patience.lightfoot@okstate.edu

Aiden Minton, Campus Organizer, OpenOKState | aiden.minton@okstate.edu

OPENOKSTATE SPOTIFY PLAYLIST

ADD SONGS TO THE OPENOKSTATE STUDY PLAYLIST

Scan the QR Code to suggest songs to be added onto the OpenOKState Spotify playlist to promote free textbooks!

OpenOKState Spotify Playlist