

UCW OER Committee Annual Report

April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024

Executive Summary

OER Committee Mandate

The mandate of the Open Educational Resources Committee (OER) is to support open educational resource initiatives at University Canada West (UCW) through the development of guidelines, support resources and services, and assistance with logistics. The committee works to enhance access to course materials and encourage the adoption of OER and Open Access resources.

Successes

Committee membership has increased over the last year to include 10 regular members, this growth is in response to the updated Terms of Reference, more targeted recruitment, and the creation of an onboarding package. The committee now has faculty representatives from all programs, Academic Affairs and the Library. Recruitment is currently underway to extend representation within the Academics and Registrar Department.

This year the Committee has been involved in a number of different promotional efforts and further integrated zero cost textbooks within the Associate of Arts program, all of which have worked to amplify and strengthen OER use at UCW. Throughout the 2023/2024 year, we have been consistently working on a few long-term projects that we are excited see come to fruition in the coming year.

A Review of the Year

1. Increased internal and external presence of the OER Committee



In the 2023-2024 period, the OER committee worked in collaboration with the Marketing and Communication department to develop and publish an [OER promotion video](#). Screened on TVs across both campuses, this video works to increase both the presence and awareness of OER at UCW and cultivates interest in openly accessible content more broadly.

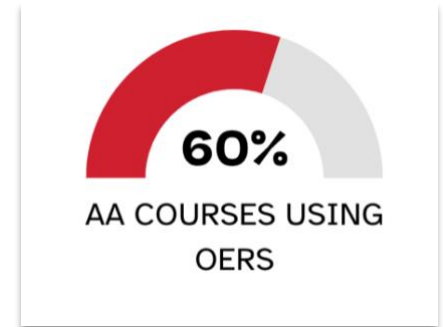
In March of 2024, the OER Committee co-funded an Open Education Week event organized by the BC Open Education Librarians Steering Committee. Titled “Planes, trains, and generative AI: Recentering open education values in new technology adoption”, this event was hosted by Brenna Clarke Gray (Coordinator of Educational Technologies, Thompson Rivers University) with guest speaker Autumn Caines (Lead Instructional Designer, University of Michigan – Dearborn). This hour-long event discussed the pedagogical and ethical implications of generative AI and how this software is often antithetical to the core values of the open education movement, namely equity, inclusion, transparency, and social justice. In working collaboratively with our peer

institutions as well as BC Campus, we have taken steps to position UCW as a strong proponent, advocate and member of Open Access and Open Education initiatives.




2. Expanded reach of OER integration in the Associate of Arts Program

The OER Committee began collaborating with the Associate of Arts (AA) program in 2022 to increase the adoption and use of OER content. As a result, over 60% of AA courses now use OER content, marking a 19% increase from the previous year.

Historically, the Committee has been unable to determine the full extent of savings for courses switching to Open Access or Library licenced materials as required reading was not standardized across all sections. As of this year, this process has changed. This means that we can now highlight the savings at a course level to demonstrate the monumental impact this kind of change can have on students within a single course.



SOC 100

	32 Course Sections <small>29 students enrolled</small>
	\$70 textbook replaced
	Savings of \$64,960 in 6 months

Sociology 100 exemplifies this change, as the course is frequently offered and has consistent enrolment. Since the content was updated in Fall 2023, there have been 32 sections with an average undergraduate class size of 29 students. The previous textbook was available for \$70, meaning that since its replacement, 928 students have saved \$64,960 within 6 months alone.

This translates to an estimated savings of nearly \$130,000 across a single year for a single undergraduate course. This is no small change, as it is estimated that the average undergraduate student will pay between \$339-\$600 for textbooks per year¹. Helping to reduce our students' financial barriers is vital to providing student centred education, increasing access to knowledge and information, and aligns with our wider institutional goals as well.

¹ Hanson, M. (2023, November 3). *Average Cost of College Textbooks*. Education Data Initiative. <https://educationdata.org/average-cost-of-college-textbooks>

Goals for the future

To continue to find new ways of supporting the institution in the adoption and use of OERs the committee has identified four focus areas for next year's projects:



Impact of OER at UCW

The OER Committee will conduct research to better understand how the UCW community recognizes, uses, and perceives open educational resources. The aim will be to track promotional efforts, identify current knowledge of OER and the committees reach, track OER use, and integrate user feedback for future planning purposes.



Tiered payment system

We will pilot a new tiered payment system. Designed to better reflect, recognize, and reward faculty members who transition to using Open Educational Resources (OER), this new model will substantially expand and diversify the existing ZCT payment structure. With this, we hope to see a significant increase in OER applications and greater momentum in creating and contributing to reputable OER repositories, which will amplify the reputation of UCW within the wider OER community.



Marketing and Promotion

To increase faculty knowledge, interest, and reception of Open Educational Resources, the Committee will be presenting about OER at UCW in the Summer 2024 RSA seminar series. This is designed to be an opportunity to dispel myths about OERs, outline OER use and adoption process at UCW, answer questions, and announce the forthcoming tiered payment structure.



Textbook price list

In collaboration with the Registrar's Office, that OER Committee is working to track and make available the list of courses who use Open Access or library licensed content in place of paid resources. This information would be available to students at the point of course registration creating greater transparency and allowing students to make informed decisions. We hope this will encourage greater adoption of OERs and keep students rising costs at the forefront