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Open Educational Resources Grants: Year Two Summary

<https://www.sfu.ca/oergrants.html>

**Background: Open Educational Resources**

Open educational resources (OER) are “teaching, learning, and research resources that are created with the intention of being freely available to users anywhere. They may include, but are not limited to, textbooks, readings, multi-media files, software, assessment tools, and even entire courses. Most are covered by open licenses that allow for using, re-mixing, and sharing.”[[1]](#footnote-1) In 2016, the Library and the Teaching & Learning Centre (TLC) initiated and jointly administered the first year of OER Grants at SFU with funding from the VP Academic.

This report summarizes the results of Year 2 of this program. It follows from the Year 1 report that is [available from the OER Grants](https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/oergrants/OER%20First%20Year%20Summary%20Report%20(Online%20Version).docx) website. The grants were again jointly administered by the Library and the TLC, with an adjudication committee populated by Library and TLC staff. The program awards faculty members up to $5,000 to assist with the redesign of a course to use OER as the primary course material, and to help with adoption and/or adaptation of open textbooks and other OER for that purpose. In addition to the funding, staff from the Library and the TLC work with recipients to assist with locating, evaluating and adapting high-quality open resources as an alternative to commercial course materials.

In 2017, open textbooks continued to be a pressing issue for SFU students. The SFU Student Society again lists promotion of open textbooks as one of its highest priority advocacy issues for 2018. Follow the hashtag #TextbookbrokeBC to find direct evidence of the impact of textbook pricing on SFU students.

**2017 Granting Activity & Impact**

Three calls for proposals were announced in February, June, and October 2017. With minimal promotion, 14 proposals were received across the three rounds. A total of 9 projects were funded at a cost of $43,795. Projects were evaluated according to the following criteria:

* The extent to which they include curation and customization of open educational resources that will be freely and openly shared throughout and beyond SFU
* Their potential impact on student experience in the form of high-quality materials, maximum access (e.g., Creative Commons licenses), open and innovative pedagogy, and cost savings to students
* The inclusion of plans to re-use open educational resources in courses in subsequent semesters

Funded projects covered a variety of subject areas including Mathematics, Education, English, Sustainable Development, Hellenic Studies, and more. To calculate the financial impact of these projects on SFU students, we added up the total number of students annually in all courses involved.

**2017 investment in grants program: $43,795**Number of funded courses: 9+  
Total enrollment in funded courses over one year: 1,830  
Average textbook cost: $100  
  
**Total student savings after one year: $183,000**

The Year 2 investment of $43,795 will result in $183,000 that will remain in the pockets of SFU students during the year after implementation alone. As these courses are offered in subsequent years, the savings will continue. This is a powerful return on investment and directly affects affordability and accessibility of education for current and future SFU students. Combined with Year 1 results saving students $240,000/year, over the two years of the grant program, SFU students will have saved more than $660,000. This is likely an underestimate of student savings, as we know that one of the courses funded in 2017, FAN X99, used OER to replace a textbook that cost more than $200.

In addition to the financial and in-kind support described above, grantees are invited to a program luncheon each year. This is an opportunity to meet others at SFU involved in using OER and in adopting new methods involving open resources and pedagogy in their classrooms. In both 2016 and 2017, this event was well attended and featured stimulating discussion where grantees shared their successes, challenges, and questions about their work with OER. In the majority of cases, they are interested in carrying on this work, either further in the funded course, or else in other courses taught by them. Finding a way to connect recipients earlier in the process to share insights, tips, and questions will be a useful improvement to the program in Year 3. Through the combined efforts of the OER Grants Program, faculty champions from the 20 funded courses to date, student advocacy, and the support of the TLC and the Library, there is significant momentum building around the adoption of OER at SFU.

Year 2 results illustrate that there is still significant demand for this granting program at SFU, and that again a relatively minor investment pays tremendous dividends for SFU students.

Appendix A: Year Two Funded Projects

**Heesoon Bai, Professor, Education**

Compiling and curating open materials that integrate the elements of contemplative modality and viewpoints with the disciplinary subject matter in EDUC 833. Will also be used in other courses in the Contemplative Inquiry MEd.

**Leith Davis, Professor, Department of English**Construction of a Database of Online Resources on the Media of the Long Enlightenment (DORMLE)that will help scholars and instructors locate and select online materials on non-print media and printed ephemera from 1688–1815 and share best practices for teaching using these resources. While designed with the instruction of students in a third-year eighteenth-century English Literature course in mind, it will be publicly available and accessible to scholars, instructors and students at all levels and in all disciplines.

**Malgorzata Dubiel, Senior Lecturer, Mathematics**

Adapting and improving the electronic textbook for FAN X99 previously created by the applicant, and publishing it as an OER. Update includes the following improvements: provide solutions to existing exercises; incorporate more practice exercises; revise and redesign the “How to use this textbook” chapter to promote self-regulated learning; develop a manual for instructors on how to use the textbook; prepare a bank of test questions.

**Michael Filimowicz, Senior Lecturure, SIAT**Creation of a comprehensive resource that can be used in IAT 443, which covers the role of interactive audiovisual media in contexts such as large-scale exhibition displays, public art with mobile interfaces, airports and other architectural spaces, theme parks or live performance.

**Andre Gerolymatos, Professor, Hellenic Studies**

Creation of an online resource with thematic modules to house difficult-to-access primary sources, interactive maps, study guides, AV recordings and bibliographies. This online component will enhance student learning in HS 477 by offering sophisticated tools to interact with research sources, self-assessment tools.

**Lannie Kanevsky, Associate Professor, Education**

Development of web-based versions of two instruments included in “The Tool Kit for High End Differentiation” for use in EDUC 428W. These instruments will replace the older versions that are unstable and do not work on mobile devices. The new versions will be interactive, tallying and reporting their results in a variety of formats that can be saved, modified and printed.

**Petra Menz, Senior Lecturer, Mathematics**

Compilation of an array of sources including lecture notes, course notes, online assignments, and practice assignments to use in MATH 157 and 158 in place of a textbook that is going out of print.

**Mark Roseland, Professor, Faculty of Environment**Identifying suitable OER to support revising the syllabus for Sustainable Development 481 for both online and classroom offerings. The revised course materials will include material from open textbooks, educational talks and other videos, parts of related MOOCs, and other resources that will provide students with theoretical background and real-world case studies.

**Mark Roseland, Professor, Faculty of Environment**Development of an inventory of sustainability-related OER that will be accessible by all instructors at SFU. Expected to be used in many courses from at least the following list: REM, Sustainable Community Development, Development and Sustainability program, Geography, Urban Studies, and in some courses from First Nations Studies and Psychology.

1. Guide Define OER,” *bccampus.ca*, last modified on January 11, 2016. <https://mediawiki.bccampus.ca/index.php/Guide_DefineOER> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)