



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

**OPEN & AFFORDABLE
EDUCATION**

Committee Report
2022-2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary

Leveraging Collaboration for Success.	3
Program Maturation	3
Pursuing Jump Start Initiatives	4
Looking Ahead	4

Background

Committee Membership	4
Our Work.	4
Ties to University Priorities.	5
Important Definitions	5

Major Findings

Collaborative Programming Fosters Innovation and Success.	6
Student Government Collaborations	6
ISU Book Store and the University Library.	7
CELT and the University Library.	7
ISU Book Store and CELT	7
University Library Course Reserves and ISU Book Store	7
Programs Continue to Develop	8
Immediate Access: Updates.	8
OER: Updates	9
Course Reserves: Updates	10
Jump Start Projects Explored for Future Development.	11
Future Planning.	12

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Leveraging Collaboration for Success

This year, the Open & Affordable Education Committee (OAEC) has leveraged our members' broad representation to coordinate more holistic support for faculty who are interested in adopting affordable course materials, most notably:

- **Building Better Courses:** The University Library has partnered with CELT staff on a workflow to help instructors who are redesigning their courses take advantage of the support available to them for creating and disseminating Open Educational Resources (OER) through the ISU Digital Press.
- **Promoting Student Engagement:** The ISU Book Store has partnered with CELT and faculty on a study that examined the efficacy of a new tool, CoachMe, which provides embedded practice exercises for students throughout eBooks provided through their courses.
- **Checking Availability:** The University Library's Course Reserves department and the ISU Book Store are coordinating with one another to ensure that students are not charged for materials in course packets that are already available or could be made available through the University Library at no cost.



Program Maturation

Our programs continued to save students money this year:

- **Immediate Access:** **120,000** student enrollments, **\$2,028,000** in savings
- **Open Educational Resources (OER):** **9,454** students, **\$553,000** in savings
- **Course Reserves:** **306** classes serving **9,605** students

While our programs continue to have a positive impact on campus, our work is focused on sustaining and improving the existing infrastructure surrounding the affordable course material programs on campus by engaging with the broader communities surrounding our work and ensuring that we are meeting the needs of students and instructors.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pursuing Jump Start Initiatives

Thanks to the university's Jump Start Initiative for affordability, representatives on our committee were able to submit proposals for funding to support the long-term development and sustainability of our programs' infrastructure. The following three proposals were funded by the program:

- **Update the Student Booklist**

to present course material requirements more clearly in Canvas.

- **Create a Data Dashboard**

to showcase the impact of open and affordable course materials across campus.

- **Improve the ISU Digital Press**

to promote the creation and use of ancillary OER that supplement open textbooks published by the Press.

Looking Ahead

As we look to the future, the OAEC will continue to work together to promote the use of various affordable course materials across campus. In the year ahead, we will begin working on the Jump Start projects funded through the university, develop additional methods for engaging with and building competencies among faculty, and endeavor to improve the marketing and awareness of our programs across campus.



BACKGROUND

The Open & Affordable Education Committee (OAEC) at Iowa State is a partnership formed in 2017 between the University Library, CELT, ISU Book Store, faculty, Student Government, Financial Aid, and the Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost.

Committee Membership

- **Abbey Elder**, University Library (Co-Chair)

- **Heather Dean**, ISU Book Store (Co-Chair)

- **Jesse Elbert**, CELT

- **Michael Cummings**, University Library

- **Jill Vasquez**, University Library

- **Ann Lent**, Student Government

- **Chad Cardani-Trollinger**, Leadership Studies

- **Harrison W. Inefuku**, University Library

- **Sayali Kukday**, Genetics, Development, & Cell Biology

- **Geoff Sauer**, English

- **Megan Myers**, World Languages & Cultures

- **Chad Olson**, Financial Aid

Our Work

Our work to advance affordability goes beyond cost savings and includes a commitment to advancing equity for students who want access to a high-quality Iowa State education. Access to free and affordable course materials improves students' progress through college and into their careers.

Ties to University Priorities

In addition to approving affordability, meeting student needs, and advancing equity for student success, the work that the OAEC does ties directly into the University's new Strategic Plan:

- **To be the most student-centric leading research university:** By supporting access to an affordable, high quality education for all our students, our initiatives advance Iowa State University's teaching and learning efforts to the same level that our institution's research outputs have seen.
- **To be the university that cultivates a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment where students, faculty and staff flourish:** By removing cost from the equation for students and allowing them to access their course materials freely or at a very reduced cost, more students at Iowa State can focus on their learning and progress through college without fears that they will be constrained by their material wealth.
- **To be the university that creates opportunities and forges new frontiers:** By working with individual instructors, departments, and campus partners like CELT, our programs currently support and will continue to support high impact practices and data-driven innovations to improve course outcomes for all our students.
- **To be the trusted partner for proactive and innovative solutions:** By sharing our programs' practices and innovations with our peer institutions, we will be able to influence the development of more programs like ours across the country. Furthermore, through these nationwide collaborations in the field of higher education, we can also improve our own offerings by learning from other programs' successes.
- **To be the university that fosters lifelong learning:** OER and other free materials supported by our programs can be accessed by students for free after their graduation, and can support professional development and learning for community members as well.

Important Definitions

Open Educational Resources (OER): Educational materials that are free of cost and access barriers, and which also carry legal permission for reuse. Materials can be accessed online or in print.

Immediate Access: A day-one access model providing digital course materials to students directly through Canvas and at a reduced rate compared to national average.

VitalSource: A technology tool that facilitates access to Immediate Access course materials in Canvas. This tool also supports VitalSource Bookshelf, an eReader platform for students, and CoachMe, an AI study tool and dashboard embedded into eBooks to promote comprehension and retention.

Library Licensed Content: Materials available through subscriptions or collections provided by the University Library. This content may be used in a course or for research purposes.

Course Reserves: The library's Course Reserves unit partners with faculty to make required course materials available for students, saving time and money. Course Reserves helps organize and make available streaming video, electronic, and print course materials through the University Library. Course Reserves manages all relevant copyright issues and fees related to copyrighted materials. Students have free access to online course materials directly through Canvas with 24/7 availability.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Collaborative Programming Fosters Innovation and Success

As in previous years, our team has continued to provide outreach across campus to spread the word about the various affordable course material options available to faculty. In addition to our regular outreach, this year we worked together to leverage the OAEC's broad representation toward more coordinated support for faculty and students. This was a necessary response to the results of our faculty survey last year, which had found that 48% of faculty were unaware of Immediate Access, 28% were unaware of OER, and 18% were unaware of Course Reserves as options for their courses ([2022 OAEC Final Report](#)). Various collaborations which have been leveraged this academic year are described in detail in the following section.

Student Government Collaborations

As in previous years, the Open & Affordable Education Committee has welcomed representatives from Student Government serving on the committee. The unique perspectives and voices of these student representatives have been vital in the long-term growth and development of our work. This year, Ann Lent, an undergraduate student in Political Science, has been a valuable partner contributing to conversations around the future of the OAEC and the needs of the student body at Iowa State. Ann has started work on a Canvas page that will provide students with resources for financial planning and other life skills, an important initiative that our team is happy to support moving forward.



MAJOR FINDINGS

ISU Book Store and the University Library

Staff from the ISU Book Store and University Library have collaborated on department visits to talk to faculty about the course material options available to them and to answer questions about related topics such as copyright and affordability. This work helped bring more attention to the various affordable course material options we support and the services available to help instructors implement these materials in their courses.

CELT and the University Library

The ISU Digital Press has collaborated with Quality and Course Design specialists from the Center of Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) on the development of a workflow to help instructors who are redesigning their courses take advantage of the support available to them for creating and disseminating OER through the Digital Press' publishing platform, Pressbooks.



ISU Book Store and CELT

The ISU Book Store has collaborated with faculty, VitalSource, and CELT to bring the Bookshelf CoachMe feature to the classroom and conduct a scholarly research study into the [Doer Effect](#) and [CoachMe](#) tool. The tool is a free, built-in study coach that provides embedded practice throughout an eBook, offering “in the moment” learner engagement and low-stakes confirmation of the material. Students prepare, practice, and focus all in one place and show up to class confident and ready to learn. ISU Book Store and CELT hosted a webinar series to share information about the Doer Effect, CoachMe tool, and direct results from Iowa State’s Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 research.



University Library Course Reserves and ISU Book Store

The University Library’s Course Reserves Department recently began working with the ISU Book Store to help reduce costs for students. The ISU Book Store communicates with Course Reserves about requested course packet materials. Course Reserves staff determine which materials the library already has or could provide access to, and will communicate with the ISU Book Store and faculty about options for reducing materials costs for students.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Programs Continue to Develop

Now that the OAEC has been working together for 6 years, many of our programs have reached a point where exponential growth is no longer a major goal. Instead, our work has pivoted to supporting the long-term sustainability of our programs and their continued positive impact of student learning outcomes across Iowa State.

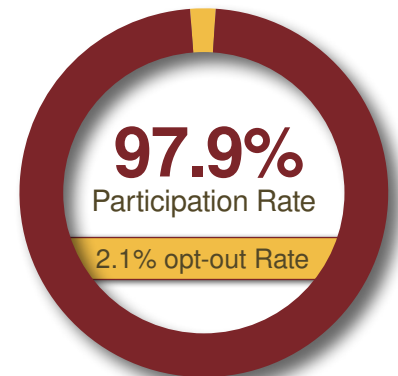
Immediate Access: Updates

The participation rate for the Bookstore’s Immediate Access (IA) program is approximately **98%** this semester, with only 2% of students with courses utilizing IA materials electing to opt out of paying for their materials (See Figure 1).

Among the students who chose to opt out, most stated that they already owned the material and did not need to purchase again. The ISU Book Store engages with faculty when a large percent of students opt out of IA to ensure the materials are truly required for their course, especially as these materials are automatically charged to the student U-Bill.

When comparing the typical cost of course materials to the discounted cost available through the IA program, students are estimated to have saved approximately \$2 million this academic year (See Figure 2).

Figure 1:
Spring 2023 IA Participation



National average participation rate:
92.8% (7.2% opt-out)

Figure 2: 2022-2023 Immediate Access Impact

Live Sections		Est. Student Savings	
Fall 2022	Spring 2023	Fall 2022	Spring 2023
1,928	1,811	\$990,841	\$1,037,828
2022-2023 Total Sections: 3,739		2022-2023 Total IA Savings: \$2,028,669	
2021-2022 Total Sections: 3,110		2021-2022 Total IA Savings: \$1,690,348	
YOY Adoption Growth: 20%		YOY Savings Growth: 20%	

In terms of total enrollments, there were 120,000+ students enrolled in courses using IA this academic year, saving students \$2,028,669, and growing. On average, students are receiving 3-4 IA units in Canvas per semester, which accounts for the majority of course materials for a full-time student.

Comparison to national, state trends

The Iowa State University Immediate Access program is one of the oldest in the country, having begun its program as an early adopter of this course material affordability initiative. Even among our peers, the participation rates of Iowa State students—those who choose not to opt out of the IA program—is among the highest in the country. VitalSource has shared the national opt out average across institutionally owned college bookstores is 7.2%. Iowa State is well below average at 2.1%.

MAJOR FINDINGS

OER: Updates

As more instructors have begun implementing and improving the OER used in their courses, we have seen more students benefiting from the use of these free materials. 9,454 students have enrolled in courses using OER this academic year, including 5,317 students in fall 2022 and 4,277 students in spring 2023 (See Figure 3).

Figure 3: 2022-2023 OER Impact

Student Enrollment	
Fall 2022	Spring 2023
5,317	4,277
2022-2023 Total OER Savings:	\$553,000
2021-2022 Total OER Savings:	\$482,000
YOY Savings Growth:	15%

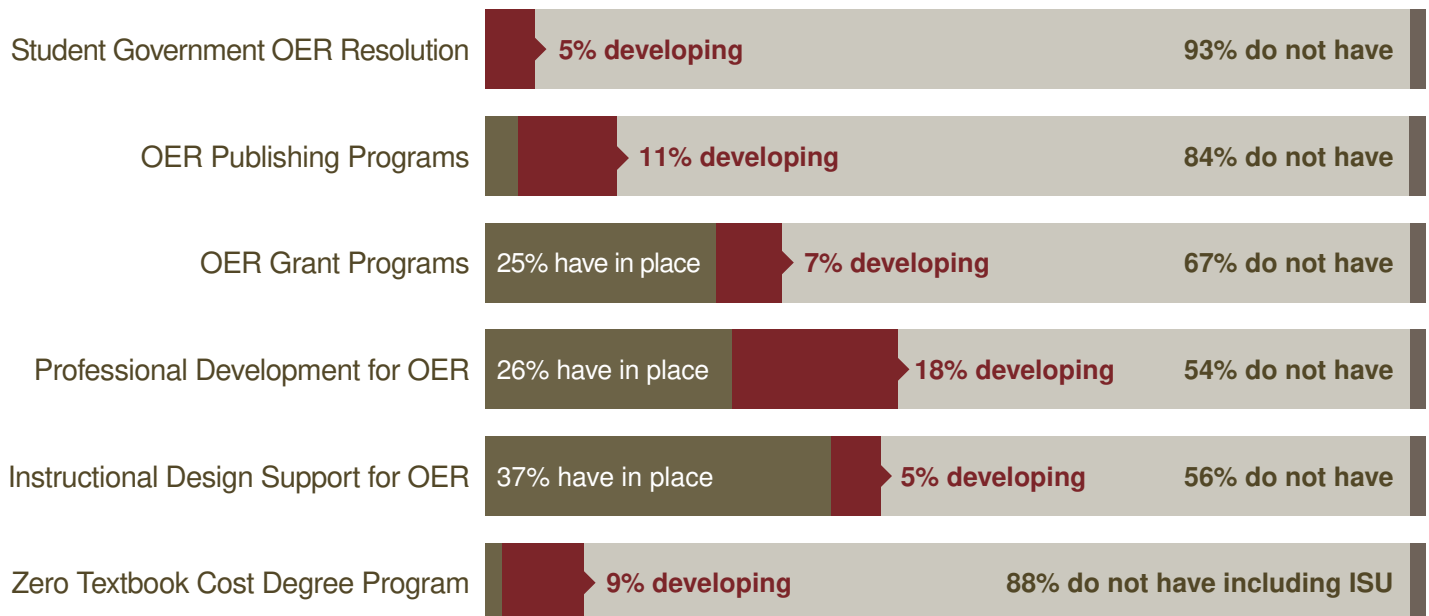
Students enrolling in courses using Open Educational Resources are not required to purchase any course materials and typically see cost savings of \$116 per student ([Midwest Higher Education Compact, 2022](#)). Since we do not count students taking Library 160 toward our total savings numbers, as this course's book has been free for many years, Iowa State students benefiting from the use of OER saved approximately **\$553,000** this academic year, up from \$480,000 in 2021/2022. Now in its sixth year, Iowa State's Open Education program has saved students approximately \$2 million.

Comparison to national, state trends

The Open Education program at the University Library oversees the coordination and support for OER across the university. This program has a strong foundation, boasting partnerships with key offices such as the ISU Book Store and CELT through the OAEC, a robust Mini-Grant program for the development of new OER, a showcase of instructors on the OER Trailblazers website, and support services such as consultations and publishing support.

Across the state of Iowa, Iowa State University's Open Education program is one of the strongest, providing a diverse set of support services and program outcomes (See Figure 4).

Figure 4: OER Programs Across Iowa, 2022



MAJOR FINDINGS

Iowa State University is one of only three institutions supporting a robust OER publishing program, for example, and the only institution in Iowa whose Student Government has put forth a recommendation or policy in support of OER ([Iowa Open Education Action Team, 2022](#)). In contrast, the only areas where we have fallen behind our peers is in the creation of zero-textbook-cost degree programs, which Northeast Iowa Community College has implemented and other colleges across the state have begun exploring ([Northeast Iowa Community College, n.d.](#)). The lead for Iowa State University's Open Education program, Abbey Elder, represents Iowa State University on the statewide Iowa Open Education Action Team and on the national SPARC Open Education Advisory Group.

On a national scale, ISU's Open Education program is among the more robust programs in place due to the depth and variety in support available to faculty. However, the staffing for the program is below average, with only one full-time librarian supporting the program's ongoing development. In contrast, programs at the University of Idaho, North Carolina State University, Penn State University, and Virginia Tech each support 2-4 staff for their Open Education programs.

Course Reserves: Updates

Information about Course Reserves is a new addition to our report this year, to share information about the use of library licensed materials in Iowa State courses to support access to materials at no cost to students. With new representation from Course Reserves on the OAEC, Jill Vasquez, we wanted to set aside space to focus on this initiative as well.

This year materials provided by Course Reserves were used by 306 classes serving 9,605 students enrolled; 5,746 in fall 2022 and 3,859 in spring 2023. Students had access to over 2,900 required course materials. Course Reserves paid over \$15,000 to provide copyright compliance and purchased over \$8,000 in new materials for this academic year. Investing in acquiring access to these materials saves our students and faculty members a significant amount over time as these resources are continually used in Iowa State courses.

Figure 5: 2022-2023 Course Reserves

Semester/Year	Fall 2022	Spring 2023
Courses	169	137
Enrollment	5,746	3,859
Number of Items	1,514	1,397

2022-2023
Course Reserve
Requests: **17%** physical materials
30% streaming media
53% electronic materials

MAJOR FINDINGS

Course Reserves: Looking ahead

While electronic materials make up the majority of requests both here and at other academic libraries; Course Reserves continues to provide physical materials to ensure high-demand items circulate quickly and to support alternatives when copyright permissions are unobtainable. In keeping with trends, Course Reserves has discontinued use of its home-grown library web space, and is now fully integrating with Canvas through an LTI module. This provides students with 24/7 access to electronic reserve materials, and a list of physical items, even when the library building is closed. Additionally, all electronic items are provided with accessibility accommodations such as searchable text, captions, or transcripts.

Going forward, Course Reserves is working on several projects. We are committed to further developing the partnership with the ISU Book Store around printed course packets. This will enable both the ISU Book Store and Course Reserves to offer more equitable options for course materials. We are pursuing new ways to assess Course Reserves' influence on course affordability. Through data collection and analysis, we can assist faculty and other campus partners with more informed decision making and additional collaboration opportunities. Finally, we are exploring options to increase access for out-of-print materials. These materials are difficult for students, the ISU Book Store, and Course Reserves to buy, reprint, or secure copyright permissions for. Improving access will help us leverage limited resources for greatest impact.

Jump Start Projects Explored for Future Development

In the spring semester of 2023, the Iowa State University Library launched a call for proposals for grant projects which would help foster the development of more sustainable infrastructure around the affordable course material initiatives supported by the OAEC. Members of our committee collaborated on the development of three proposals which were accepted for funding through this program:

- **Updates to the student booklist:** Improvements to the presentation and transparency of course material adoptions in the student booklist.
- **Data dashboard for course material costs:** A forward-facing dashboard for showcasing the impact of affordable course material adoptions on campus through data.
- **Digital Press support for open textbook ancillary database:** An improvement to the Iowa State University Digital Press' book hosting tool, to allow linking and sharing ancillary materials which are linked to open textbooks published by the Digital Press.

Most of these proposed projects have a similar purpose: providing more visibility to the work that we do and leveraging our existing services through more targeted support for faculty in need. These areas of need were identified in last year's faculty and student surveys on affordable course materials, which are summarized in the OAEC's 2021/2022 Annual Report.

We hope that the Jump Start programs we have proposed will help our programs grow sustainably by helping students understand that their instructors are taking various avenues to help save them money and by providing more support for faculty who are interested in adopting affordable course materials into their courses.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Future Planning

Looking ahead to the upcoming year, we have a mix of continuing and new projects that we're excited to pursue. Firstly, we are eager to follow through on the projects which received funding as Jump Start initiatives. These proposals have the potential to significantly enhance student experiences and help faculty members make their courses more affordable. We're excited to work with stakeholders across campus to see these projects through to completion.

Additionally, we aim to increase faculty engagement through a variety of activities that focus on building open and affordable educational competencies among faculty. This might include various activities such as a professional development series, a symposium to showcase local champions' work, a luncheon for Miller Mini-Grant recipients, a series of events for Open Education Week, and/or a faculty learning community on open pedagogy. Through these initiatives, faculty members will have opportunities to expand their skills, showcase their work, and learn from their peers.

Finally, we plan to increase awareness of our work among the broader Iowa State University community. Awareness is a crucial component of the success of our work, and we're keen to increase campus-wide knowledge of our initiatives, especially among the student body. To achieve this, we plan to implement more forward-facing marketing and communications initiatives that will showcase the work we do and keep students informed of ongoing efforts to make their college experience more affordable. Through these efforts, we hope to raise the profile of our work and engage with a wider audience.

