

Open and Affordable Education Committee Charge

1-8-2019

Dear Open & Affordable Education Committee,

Affordability is a growing cause for concern in higher education. At Iowa State University, rising student debt has led to efforts under the strategic plan to increase the amount of financial aid available to students. Open Educational Resources (OER), course materials that are free to use and adapt, are emerging as another potential route to save students money. The adoption of an open textbook in one course, for example, will mean once less textbook bought by every student in the class. With textbooks topping out at over \$300, the potential student savings represented by OER adoption is significant.

Interest in OER at ISU has grown over the last two years. The ISU Student Government passed a resolution in 2017 recommending faculty consider adopting OER in their courses when appropriate. In 2018, they passed a proclamation that thanked the faculty who have done so. In addition, an informal ISU working group, the Open and Affordable Education Committee, formed in 2017 to begin raising awareness about OER and supporting their adoption. The working group, which includes faculty as well as representatives from the University Library, CELT, the University Bookstore, the Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost, Student Government, has made considerable progress in the last 18 months. It helped establish the Miller Open Mini-Grants program, dispensing \$48,000 to ISU faculty for OER projects in 2018. The group also led the effort to have ISU join the Open Textbook Network. But more work remains to be done if ISU is to fully realize the promise of OER to save students money and improve classroom learning.

To affirm, enable, and expand its work in support of OER at ISU, the Senior Vice President and Provost charges the Open and Affordable Education Committee as follows:

- Examine national trends regarding OER and make recommendations regarding best practices of their use
- Examine the current use of OER across ISU and make recommendations to increase their use while respecting faculty rights and responsibilities
- Identify any impediments to OER and other affordable course materials adoption at ISU
- Explore additional affordable course material initiatives that could be developed in the future
- Continue to lead and administer the committee's existing OER initiatives

A report that includes recommendations is due October 1, 2019. To the extent that the committee feels additional charges would be beneficial to the goal of increasing the adoption of OER, they may be added as the committee feels appropriate.

Thank you for your service to ISU.