Strategic Plan for Open Educational Resources at Taft College

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Open Educational Resources

Open educational resources, or OER, are course materials that are openly licensed so that students can access the information for free. The material is often available online, but could include course supplies, software, or textbooks that the college purchases and provides to students free of charge. For ease of understanding in this planning document, the term “OER” will be used to describe openly licensed and online textbooks.

Vision, Mission and Values

Taft College

The mission of Taft College and its stated values (Vision, Mission, and Values Statements) can be supported through the use of open educational resources.

Vision

*Taft College instills a passion for learning, leading to success for all.*

To fulfill a passion for learning, OER can be accessed at any time from any device connected to the internet (and any device not connected to the internet if you download the OER). Additionally, many OER link to additional resource so that student can keep following their passion and learning more. Also, when students have access to their textbooks by the first day of class, they can focus on the material and succeed in their course.

Mission

*Taft College is committed to creating a community of learners by enriching the lives of all students we serve through career technical education, transfer programs, foundational programs, and student support services. Taft College provides an equitable learning environment defined by applied knowledge leading to students’ achievement of their educational goals.*

OER can be one facet of an *equitable learning environment* by assuring that all students have access to the textbook by the first day of class. Having access to their textbook from the very beginning of the course can result in improved student achievement.

Values

- *Students and their success:* Research suggests that courses with OER not only saves students money, but also increases their success in the course.
• **A learning community with teaching excellence**: It is easier to have a learning community when all students have access to the textbook from the first day of class. Additionally, groups of faculty who teach a course may work together to curate OER that fits all of their needs. This is possible because OER allows for flexibility in topic order and inclusion.

• **An environment conducive to learning, fairness, dialogue, and continuous improvement**: Having access to course learning materials is conducive to learning and fairness. OER can be continuously improved as the author recognizes new student needs or learns of faculty suggestions through dialogue.

• **A communicative, collaborative, collegial, and respectful culture**: The OER community emphasizes diversity and representation, and strives for material that is accessible to students with differing abilities and technological access.

• **A partnership of students, faculty, support services, and community**: Creating or curating OER for a discipline can bring together faculty, as well as students and support services. As more OER is utilized across the campus, more student, faculty, and staff will be involved in the OER endeavor.

• **Innovation, diversity, creativity, and critical thinking**: OER itself is an innovative and creative enterprise that requires critical thinking. The OER community is also committed to developing learning materials that are more diverse and representative than what is typical available from commercial textbook publishers.

• **Academic, financial, personal, and professional integrity**: Utilizing OER has a great financial benefit to students, in addition to the academic benefit that every student could have access to their course’s educational materials. Well-constructed OER can also showcase Taft College faculty’s professional integrity.

• **Employees and their professional development**: Faculty professional development is available in many areas related to OER.

• **A transparent, accessible, participative governance structure**: We hope that many constituencies in the college community will support OER endeavors and come together to implement this important resource for students.

**Taft College Strategic Action Plan**

The **Strategic Action Plan** for Taft College is organized by Lagging Indicators and Leading Indicators that are expected to result in improved college functioning and student success. With support from the College, data could be collected and analyzed to see if the connections between OER and student success found at other institutions are apparent at Taft College.

**Leading Indicators**

Research suggests that OER improves success rates (Leading #1), which may increase persistence rates (Leading #2). OER may also improve successful completion of transfer-level English and math in students’ first year (Leading #3). With free textbooks, students may also be able to enroll in more credits (Leading #4) each semester since the burden of purchasing multiple textbooks would be relieved. Students find OER beneficial (Leading #6), which often results in higher enrollment in sections that provide OER (Leading #9). OER fits into the **Guided Pathways framework** by having students “stay on the path” by continuing to pass classes and enroll at Taft College (Leading #7). One aspect of OER at Taft College could be grant development (Leading #12).
Lagging Indicators
Research suggests that OER improves success rates (Leading #1), which ultimately can improve graduation rates (Lagging #1), transfers (Lagging #2), and achieving learning outcomes (Lagging #5). OER also can improve equity for students from under-resourced communities (Lagging #6) by providing free textbooks to support student learning.

Support
Academic Senate
The local and state-wide Academic Senate has supported the use, creation, record-keeping, and leadership for OER and zero textbook cost (ZTC) for many years. The follow resolutions were passed by the state-wide Academic Senate (ASCCC):

- **Assigned-** Fall 2012: Pursue Statewide Open Educational Resources for Student Success
- **Completed-** Spring 2016: Support for Faculty Open Educational Resources Coordinators
- **Completed-** Spring 2017: Support Use of Sabbaticals and Other Professional Development for Open Educational Resources Development
- **Assigned-** Fall 2018: Establish Local Open Educational Resources Liaisons
- **Assigned-** Spring 2019:
  - Support for Faculty Open Educational Resources Coordinators
  - Support the Development of Open Educational Resources (OER)
  - Documenting Open Educational Resources Options in Course Outline of Record
- **Assigned-** Fall 2020: Recommendations for the Implementation of a Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) Designation in Course Schedules
- **Assigned-** Spring 2021:
  - Institutionalizing Open Educational Resources
  - Advocate for On-Going Funding for the ASCCC Open Educational Resources Initiative

Locally, the Taft College Academic Senate has also been supportive of OER with a resolution supporting planning a ZTC degree in December 2016. This planning process was supported by outside grants. In January 2017, the local Academic Senate approved planning to make Administration of Justice a ZTC degree. This was accomplished by support of grants, and the work of full-time and part-time faculty and counselors, and the Distance Education Coordinator. Taft College also has had an OER Liaison that has worked with the state-wide Academic Senate for several years.

California
With support from the ASCCC (Academic Senate of the California Community Colleges), the California Assembly passed **AB 798** in 2015 which created the Open Educational Resources Adoption Incentive Program. California has supported OER through budget allocations for several years, as well. Most recently, $115 million was allocated to support OER across the state.

Taft College
Taft College has already been supportive of OER development. For example, the College helped coordinate the grant that supported converting the Administration of Justice degree into a ZTC grant. Additionally, the first sabbatical for Taft College was awarded to find or develop an OER for behavioral statistics. This support is critical for increasing OER knowledge and use to help students reach their goals.
OER Vision & Goals
While there is no formal committee related to OER or course supplies affordability at Taft College, the AS OER Liaison and interested faculty have worked together to create this document in the hopes of developing the infrastructure and culture to sustain OER efforts on campus.

OER Vision:
*Taft College will utilize affordable course materials to allow students to more easily fulfill their passion for learning, leading to success.*

OER Goals
Goals of utilizing OER are to help support reaching the Strategic Action Plan’s goals related to student success, persistence, or achieving a degree or certificate. The OER goals development by a small group of faculty can be summarized into these main areas:

1. **Support faculty in finding or developing quality OER.**
2. **Support ease of use of OER by students.**
3. **Support the evaluation of current OER and usage.**
4. **Publicize OER at Taft College.**

Support faculty in finding or developing quality OER.
- Support individual faculty through stipends, alternative committee assignments, or release time to search for OER to meet the needs of courses in their discipline.
- Support individual or small groups of faculty through stipends, alternative committee assignments, or release time to adapt (curate, compile) OER to meet the needs of a target course in their discipline.
- Support individual or small groups of faculty through stipends, alternative committee assignments, or release time to create OER to meet the needs of a target course in their discipline.
- Support improving accessibility of resources and material for students with disabilities by student workers, classified employees, or faculty stipends, alternative committee assignments, or release time.
- Support improving diverse representation of resources and material by student workers, classified employees, or faculty stipends, alternative committee assignments, or release time.
- Support the creation of quiz banks for new or current OER by student workers, classified employees, or faculty stipends, alternative committee assignments, or release time.
- Support faculty and staff professional development through earning certificates or completing courses for OER; faculty stipends or release time could also be utilized to create our own certificates or courses for OER knowledge.

Support ease of use of OER by students.
- Support technology that makes it easy for students to find sections with OER, and then to find their course’s OER.
- Support for printing of OER.
- Support to convert current OER in PDFs to LibreTexts.org, Canvas modules, or another online platform.
Support the evaluation of current OER and usage.

- Support data collection and reporting of OER usage and outcomes by student workers, classified employees, or faculty stipends, alternative committee assignments, or release time.
- Support an OER Coordinator through faculty release time.
- Support cross-functional work through a shared governance committee or workgroup.

Publicize OER at Taft College

- Work with Taft College faculty and/or staff to develop a TC OER webpage as a hub for information on OER.
- Symposium/conference for Taft College or the central valley through support of a faculty coordinator and conference expenses.
- Dashboard of OER use and outcome metrics through support from information technology and institutional research.
- Support advertising of free textbooks to potential students.

Measurable Outcomes

Faculty will continue to work to reach these goals by determining measurable outcomes and their current baseline related to:

- OER usage
- Persistence
- Success rates
- Transfer, degrees, and certificate attainment

Funding

Prioritizing what activities and initiatives to fund is always a struggle. Below are relevant options that other colleges have used:

- Professional development funding to learn more about OER, earn certificates, or take classes
- Guided Pathways
- Equity funding
- Student government
- Emergency funds for COVID-19 relief
- Earmarked money from the state

Conclusion

OER is important for student equity and success. Providing educational resources that are easy for students to access can also help reach the institution’s goals related to student educational achievement. Although this work can be done individually, we will be more successful if many areas of the college work together.