Innovation Grant Application

August 2014

Tina Ulrich, Director of Library Services 995-1063 tulrich@nmc.edu
Jan Oliver, Director of Educational Media Technologies 995-1076 joliver@nmc.edu

Project Title: Open Educational Resources Pilot Program

Describe the proposed project and explain how it advances innovation at NMC.

Expensive textbooks contribute significantly to the cost of higher education. In an effort to reduce textbook costs, some community colleges are creating programs that encourage faculty to swap their traditional textbooks for free online textbooks and other existing open educational resources that can be freely adapted and altered to meet faculty standards. Both faculty and students are reporting high rates of satisfaction with this change. The potential for saving students money is enormous. For example, if just four high-volume classes with $130-$270 textbooks adopted open texts for two semesters, NMC students would save over half a million dollars. (See “Textbook Prices & Course Registrations 2014”)

If indeed we are able to make textbooks available to our students from the first day of classes at little or no cost and without compromising the quality of education, we have the opportunity to reduce the cost of college by a significant amount without lowering tuition. This project is a small pilot providing incentive and support for NMC faculty who are willing to experiment with free resources.

Our plan is to find 10 NMC faculty who are willing to revise one of their courses to use only free resources. Librarians will be available to help them find potential materials; Educational Media Technologies will provide technical and instructional design support; and the bookstore will help them to make their course materials available to students in print. Each of the 10 will receive an iPad (or other tablet of comparable value) or $500.

This pilot will help the NMC community learn about open educational resources and give us more information about how we can best use OERs in the future to make college more affordable for our students.
What phase of innovation is your project/program in? Choose one:

Discovery
This is a learn-by-doing project. We want to see how the practice of using freely available online course materials affects faculty, staff, students, the bookstore, and the college’s perception in the community.

Who is involved? (Include internal and external collaborators)

Tina Ulrich, Library Director, and the other librarians will be available to help participating faculty find OERs that meet their standards of content, quality, and accessibility. The library will maintain a LibGuide website linking to academic content like e-textbooks, MOOCs, videos, websites, and journal articles to enable faculty to find and evaluate potential text material.

Jan Oliver, Educational Media Technologies, and the instructional designers and technology specialists will be available to help faculty revise their courses and make the new materials accessible online.

Jeff Straw, faculty member and Director of the Center for Instructional Excellence, and Kay Hall, Bookstore Course Materials Supervisor, will be consulted along the way to provide their perspectives, ideas, and advice.

How does the project support the mission of Northwestern Michigan College?

MISSION:
Northwestern Michigan College provides lifelong learning opportunities to our communities.

VALUES:
We each will practice responsible stewardship for the human, physical, financial and environmental resources entrusted to our care.

- According to the National Association of College Stores, over 77% of the cost of a textbook goes to the publisher. 18% goes to operating the bookstore, and only 3.7% is income. Using open textbooks and other open resources is a way to reduce the cost of higher education without making a big dent in the college’s income. The bookstore can recover part of the lost income by printing and binding copies of the free resources and selling them to students at a profit.

We will exhibit foresight by monitoring the changing world around us and taking actions today that prepare us to meet future needs of our communities.

- Our students increasingly need and expect mobility, flexibility and ease of access to course materials.
- Digital media literacy is a key skill in all disciplines and professions.
- The debt our students take on to obtain a degree will be a significant factor in their lives for years after they leave college. The average student spends $1,200 per year on textbooks. If we can reduce the amount of money our students have to borrow without compromising the quality of education, we will be making an economic impact on their futures and the future of our community.
We will seek others who share our vision and values, and collaborate with them on behalf of our communities.

- Many community colleges have pioneered the use of open educational resources and are freely sharing their materials, experience, and expertise.
  - Northern Virginia Community College has an OER-based General Education program which gives students the option of completing all of their core courses without purchasing a textbook.
  - Tacoma Community College’s “Liberate $250K” project exceeded its goal of saving students $250,000 in one year by offering 10 OER-based courses.
  - Tidewater Community College in Virginia offers a business degree that requires no purchased textbooks.
  - Maricopa Community Colleges in Phoenix is well on their way to reaching their goal of saving their students $5 million in 5 years.
- Guidelines offered by institutions like the Association of College and Research Libraries and the Community College Consortium for Open Educational Resources now exist to help us navigate change.
- The use of OERs allows faculty to draw on the knowledge and creativity of their colleagues at other institutions, use a wide variety of formats, and work with others to create new resources to meet their needs.
- The increasing use of Creative Commons licensing has freed educators from the fear of copyright violation.

How does the project relate to NMC’s Strategic Agenda? (Be as specific as possible)

- Ensure that NMC learners are prepared for success in a global society and economy.
  - Successful students need textbooks on the first day of class. Many students put off or avoid buying textbooks to save money. Starting the semester with all students having access to their texts leads to better grades and higher retention rates. Reducing textbook costs and increasing easy access will help NMC students to succeed.
  - Faculty who have used OERs report that they are using more culturally-diverse materials and staying more up-to-date in their fields than they did when using conventional textbooks.
  - Using OER text materials gives instructors the ability to share, collaborate, and adapt resources of scholars from all over the world.
- Establish national and international competencies and provide leadership in select educational areas connected to the regional economy and assets.
  - OERs are easily updated and uniquely suited to academic areas experiencing rapid change. Because they don’t have to be printed, sold, and distributed, they can be updated continuously, making them much more agile in emerging fields of study than printed textbooks.
  - Delivered learning through a networked workforce.
    - Faculty who use OERs report spending more time collaborating with colleagues than when they used conventional textbooks.
    - The use of OERs requires a network of professionals:
      - Librarians help identify potential resources
      - Faculty evaluates, chooses, and adapts
      - Instructional designers and technology specialists help adapt the curriculum and make it accessible
      - Bookstore provides printing, binding, and distribution to students
How does this project benefit the region/state/nation/world?
In the Center for Michigan’s 2014 report, “Michigan Speaks,” which reflects the results of interviews with 5,500 Michigan citizens, the fear of the increasing cost of college and the long-term consequences of student debt was one of the four major urgent priorities for Michigan voters in the coming elections. This project is an opportunity for NMC to use OERs to address a major concern of our community.

How will effectiveness of the project be measured?
Savings: Amount saved for students
Satisfaction: Survey of participating faculty and students
Achievement: Comparative success of students in classes
Cost: Assessment of lost bookstore revenue vs. profits on printing OERs

How and when will the results be shared? (Be specific)
- Participating faculty share experiences with their peers on Faculty Professional Development Day in October 2015
- Write in the weekly blogs, SCOOP and Intercom
- Seek out local media publicity
- Develop a formal report for Presidents’ Council

When will the project begin and end? (Provide a brief timeline including major activities.)

September 2014 - Communicate OER initiative to faculty through various means: SCOOP article, Intercom, and/or departmental meetings.

October 2014 - Give brief preview of project at Faculty Professional Development Day

November 2014 - Present project to faculty at Fall Friday Forum; identify potential faculty and courses.

Nov 2014-Jan 2015 - Interested faculty work with support staff to identify and evaluate potential OER for courses and submit a plan to participate in Fall 2015 pilot.

Mid-February, 2015 - CIE, Tina Ulrich, and Jan Oliver select participants and award stipends/premiums based on student savings, college impact, OER resources, and viability of plan.

Before March 1, 2015 - Notify bookstore of changes in texts for participating faculty

March - Early August 2015 - Faculty work with staff to integrate OER content into their courses.

August - December 2015 - Faculty teach their revised OER courses.

October 2015 - Faculty adopters present at Professional Development Day

December 2015 - Project team surveys participating students and faculty about their experiences using OER, evaluates the project, and makes recommendations to the college for next steps.
Budget:

### Budget for Open Educational Resources Pilot Program Innovation Grant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue</th>
<th>Program or Project</th>
<th>Grant Request</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,000</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-kind</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>$10,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenses</th>
<th>Program or Project</th>
<th>Grant Request</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>iPads/Cash incentive (10 @ $500)</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,000</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Staff time (100 hours @ $25)</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMT Staff time (100 hours @ $25)</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total In-kind</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$0</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$10,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue over Expenses</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For Faculty/Staff projects, please provide name of Vice President or Executive Sponsor:
Todd Neibauer, LRT Director

__________________________________________  _______________________
Signature                                      Date

Sponsor: Please provide statement of support & describe value this project brings to program of study:

I wholeheartedly support this project. There is a lot of duplicated effort in education when it comes to course design and curriculum resources. It is important for the college to seriously consider the cost savings that can be realized from the use of Open Educational Resources (OER). There is an added benefit that OER materials are in a digital format that makes them more accessible to learners in general and easier to incorporate into existing Moodle courses.
References


[http://link.videoplatform.limelight.com/media/?mediaId=a1f141bf03fb4e3eae50e5065125e8ff\&width=720\&height=457\&playerForm=1d5df8c099144f1882c67f7c202b84b1].


