

**OER Efforts at AUM:
OER-Based General Education Course Development
2021 National Distance Learning Week**

Shanta Varma, Ph.D.

Xinyue Ren, Ph.D.

Office of Distance Education and Collaborative Partnerships

Auburn University at Montgomery, AL



Agenda

- Who we are?
- What are our strategic goals?
- Why the OER initiative?
- What is the initiative?

AUM Background

- Diverse student body
- High % of students receiving financial aids
- Low retention rate



AUM Strategic Goals

Maintain AUM as an affordable campus

- Explore additional ways to reduce textbook and course material costs
 - Increase options for Rent-a-Book
 - Create partnerships with textbook publishers to develop an all-inclusive program focusing on cost reduction
 - **Increase usage of open educational resources (OERs)**

UNESCO Recommendation

- Building the capacity of stakeholders to create, access, reuse, adapt and redistribute OER;
- Developing supportive policy for OER;
- Encouraging inclusive and equitable quality OER;
- Nurturing the creation of sustainability models for OER; and
- Promoting and reinforcing international cooperation in OER.

© UNESCO 2021

Open Educational Resources (OERs) Definition

“Open Educational Resources (OER) are learning, teaching and research materials in any format and medium that reside in the public domain or are under copyright that have been released under an open license, that permit no-cost access, re-use, re-purpose, adaptation and redistribution by others” (UNESCO, 2019).

Poll 1: Have you ever used
OERs?

Loading...

What are Open Educational Resources (OERs)?

- Free v.s. Open
- 5Rs

The 5Rs

Retain	• Make and own copies
Reuse	• Use in a wide range of ways
Revise	• Adapt, modify, and improve
Remix	• Combine two or more
Redistribute	• Share with others

Global Open Educational Resources Movement by Cable Green is licensed under [CC-BY](#) From the University of Alberta

Poll 2: What types of OERs have you used, and how did you adopt them to your courses?

🌐 When poll is active, respond at PolleEv.com/xyr150

What types of OERs have you used in your courses, how did you adopt them?

Loading...

Why Working on OERs at AUM?

- Affordability
- Localization and personalization
- Current materials
- Cultural relevant
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Credits for promotion
- Faculty collaboration community

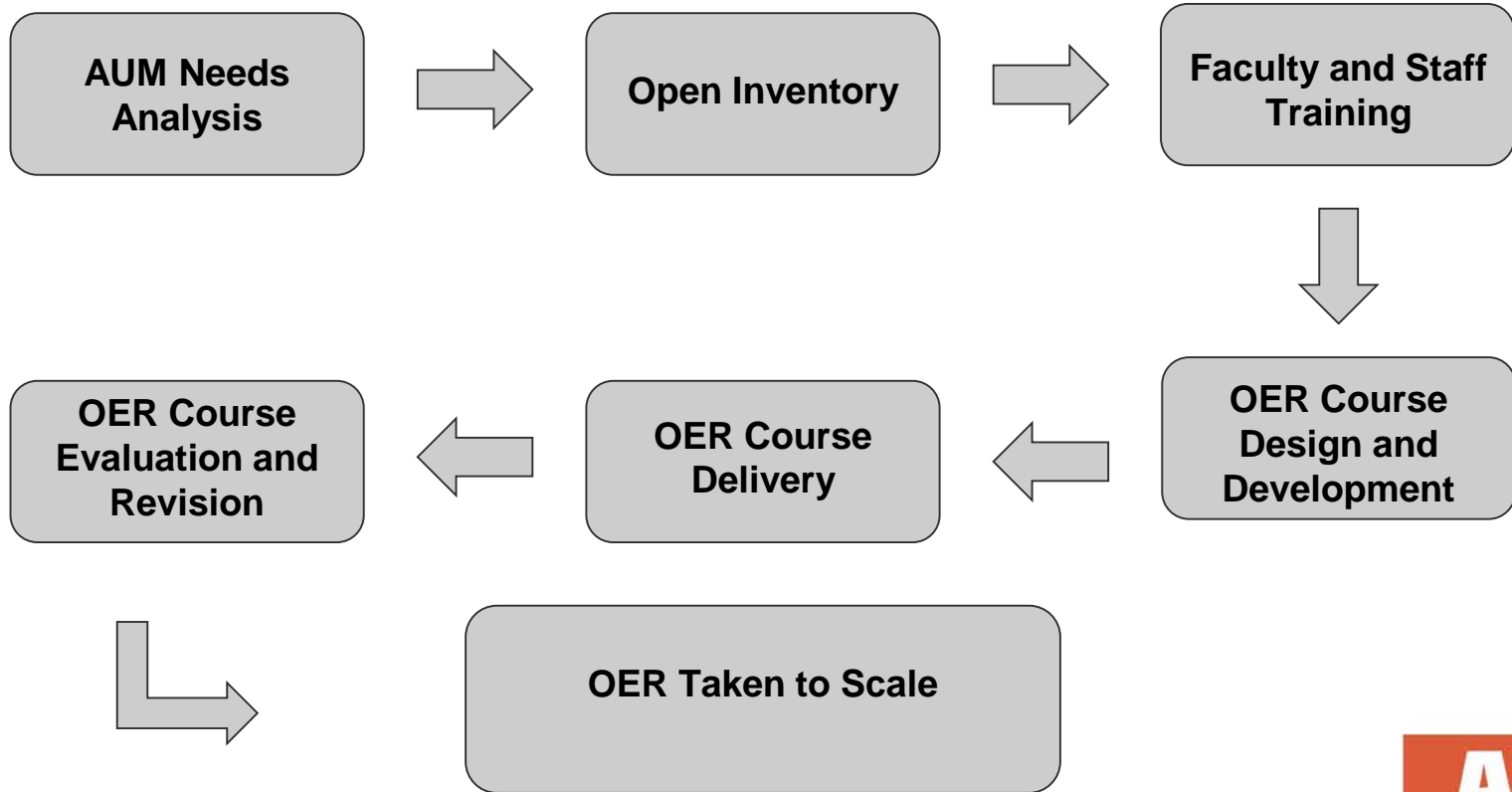
Why General Education Courses?

- Mandatory core courses
- Prescribed instructional materials
- Expensive textbooks and supplemental materials

Objectives of AUM Initiative

- Advertise the concept with faculty members at AUM
- Design and develop OER-based general education core courses
- Reduce the cost of books/instructional materials
- Enhance student learning experiences and improve student retention
- Collaborate with partner institutions to collate an OER repository

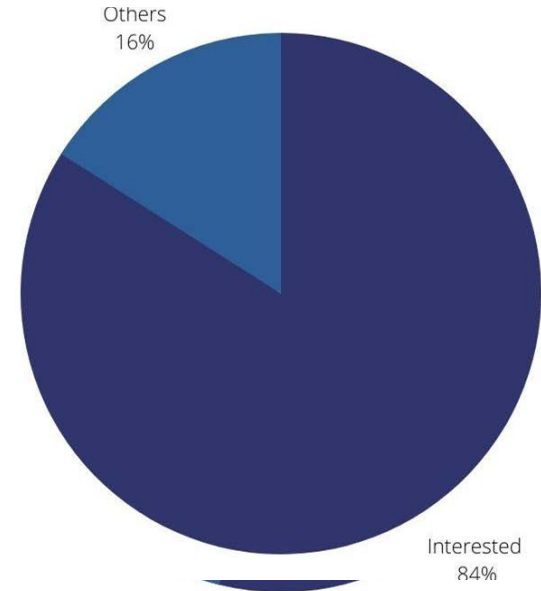
OER Initiative Workflow



Needs Analysis

A survey with three questions was distributed to 4581 students enrolled in Spring 2021

- How much money are you spending o
- If you are not buying books, then why
- Would you be interested in saving mo resources instead of buying books?



Needs Analysis

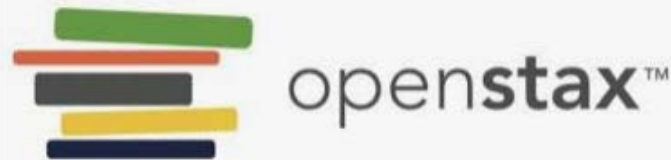
Additional Data from the University Bookstore:

- Inclusive Access program to decrease the cost of textbooks.
- Students still need to spend around \$120 on core course textbooks.
- Around \$1680 for all of the required core courses books.
- For 627 freshmen, we would have saved above 1 million dollars.

Open Inventory



The screenshot shows the OER Commons website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the OER Commons logo (three colored circles: orange, green, blue) and the text "COMMONS OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES". To the right of the logo are links for "Discover", "Hubs", "Groups", and "Our Services", followed by a green "Add OER" button and a search icon with the text "Sign In/Register". The main content area features a background image of a desk with a laptop and papers. The text "Explore. Create. Collaborate." is prominently displayed in white. Below this, a smaller line of text reads: "OER Commons is a public digital library of open educational resources. Explore, create, and collaborate with educators around the world to improve curriculum." At the bottom of the main content area, there is a search bar with the placeholder text "What are you looking for?" and a search icon. To the right of the search bar are three dropdown menus labeled "Subject", "Education Level", and "Standard", followed by a green "Search" button. Below the search bar, there is a link that says "Fine tune your search with our advanced search."



Open Textbook Library



The screenshot shows the Alabama OER Commons website. The background is a photograph of a river with green reeds. In the center, there is a large, colorful logo for "AVL" (Alabama Virtual Library) with the letters in green, orange, and blue. Below the logo, the text "Alabama OER Commons" is displayed in a bold, white font. Underneath that, a smaller line of text reads: "Open textbooks, lessons, and more, developed for and by Alabama educators and students." At the bottom of the main content area, there is a search bar with the placeholder text "Search hub resources" and a search icon. Below the search bar, there is a navigation menu with links for "About Alabama OER Commons", "Made in Alabama", "Collections", "Groups", "OER Tutorials", and "Tools and Templates".

OER Creation Cycles

First Pilot Cycle

Planning and Training Phase →

Design and Development Phase →

Course Offering and Data Collection Phase

- Present the idea to upper admin and get a buy-in
- Develop a timeline for the project
- Participation and collaboration between faculty and staff
- IDs and student aides will provide assistance

Second and Cycle

Design and Development Phase

Course Offering and Data Collection Phase

Anticipated Challenges

- Funding
- Faculty participation
- Quality of instructional materials
- Development process and timeline
- Student engagement and experience

Poll 3: What are the difficulties
have you experienced while
creating OERs?

Loading...

How can the Office of Distance Education help?

☐ Instructional Designers

- professional development
- project management
- assist in integrating open learning materials
- assist in the creation of resources on the LMS
- course delivery support
- course evaluation and revision
- and much more

If you want to collaborate with us to help students reduce the cost of education, please contact:

Dr. Shanta Varma
Special Advisor to the Chancellor
Office of Distance Education & Collaborative Partnerships
svarma@aum.edu

Dr. Xinyue Ren
Instructional Designer
Office of Distance Education & Collaborative Partnerships
xren@aum.edu

Q&A