

Open Education Initiatives in Kansas Higher Education

Executive Summary and Report



Kansas Board of Regents OER Steering Committee

https://www.kansasregents.org/academic_affairs/open-educational-resources

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Executive Summary

In April 2021, the KBOR OER Steering Committee distributed a survey to all public higher education institutions in Kansas. This survey was created to gather baseline information on how open educational resources (OER) are currently being implemented across the various colleges and universities in the state. The 2022 survey represents the second year this survey has been distributed. After reviewing the responses to the 2022 survey, major findings were identified:

A majority have a policy, program, or committee to support OER. Many that do not are exploring the possibility of adding a policy, program, or committee.

16 of 29 responding institutions indicated that they have a policy, program or committee to support OER use on campus. Breaking out by institution type, this included all 7 Universities and 9 of 15 community colleges. Among those who did not have one established, all but 5 of 14, including the University of Kansas Medical Center, indicated they are exploring the possibility of adding a policy, program, or committee to support OER.

A limited number of institutions have OER incentive/grant programs or funding to support transitioning to OER.

6 of 7 universities and two community colleges have incentive/grant programs. While this is one less total institution than last year, both Wichita State and Johnson County Community College report no longer having such programs, while the sole addition is Colby Community College.

Time, resources, and awareness are challenges to OER adoption. Funding/support was the most common support or service indicated to overcome these barriers.

In line with last year's assessment, common challenges to OER adoption reported were lack of time, resources and awareness. Funding/support was the most commonly indicated support or service to overcome these challenges.

Introduction

Open educational resources (OER) “are teaching, learning and research materials in any medium—digital or otherwise—that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions¹.” That is, OER include built in permission to retain, reuse, revise, remix, and redistribute the material².

Since 1967, the cost of educational books and supplies (which is primarily textbook costs) has increased over 2000% compared to an 800% increase in the overall consumer price index^{3, 4}. The Consumer Price Index reports that the cost of college course textbooks increased 88 percent from 2006 to 2016, compared to an increase of 21 percent for all items⁵. Because of their high cost, many students forgo the purchase of textbooks due to limited funds, putting them at a disadvantage. In 2019, the Kansas Board of Regents Student Advisory Committee conducted a survey to demonstrate the burden of textbook costs on students at Regent Institutions. They found that 48 percent of 6,474 regent institutions’ students indicated they did not purchase or rent a required textbook in the spring semester. 16 percent said they did not purchase or rent three or more required textbooks⁶. With OER, all students get equal and immediate access to educational materials.

The cost of textbooks is having a deeper impact on college students. A 2018 survey of 1,651 former and current students found that “Thirty percent of survey respondents said they had forgone a trip home to see family, 43 percent said they skipped meals, 31 percent registered for fewer classes, and 69 percent worked a job during the school year—all to save money for books⁷.”

There is also evidence that student success is positively impacted by replacing commercial textbooks and materials with OER. In a recent analysis, there was a 29 percent decrease in the risk of college students withdrawing from open textbook courses (78,593 students) compared to commercial textbook comparison courses (100,012 students)⁸. Learning outcomes were equal between the courses. In the University of Georgia system (21,822 students), students in courses using OER had a final GPA that was significantly higher than courses using traditional textbooks, and DFW rates (students earning a grade of D, F, or withdrawing from a course) decreased compared to non-OER courses. Further, they found OER course student improvements in GPA and DFW rates were greater among Pell recipient, part-time, and non-white students that had lower rates of student success⁹. Content tailored to a course by the instructor is a contributor to student success. After financial savings and easy access, customization was the third most cited benefit by K-State students¹⁰. Several other

states, like Colorado, Georgia, Oregon, California, and New York, have been pushing OER implementation for years, and students in their systems are reaping the benefits.

Who We Are

To encourage OER use across public institutions in the state of Kansas, the OER Steering Committee was created in 2019 and is made up of representatives from all Kansas public higher education institutions who are interested in learning more and expanding OER use across our system.

We understand that OER are not the only answer to the problem of expensive course materials; however, we would like to increase awareness of these resources and the work being done to make them better for students and instructors in Kansas.

This survey was created to review and quantify the work being done to support OER adoption and creation across the state. After the baseline established by the 2021 survey, 2022 provides similar challenges and subtle changes that we hope informs the future of OER's use and benefits in the state of Kansas.

Participants

The survey was sent to the chief academic officer at each institution to direct to the appropriate respondent to accurately answer the survey questions.

29 of the 33 public higher education institutions in Kansas completed the survey, which was an increase of one from last year's baseline. Respondents include 18 community colleges, 3 technical colleges, and 7 Universities, including the University of Kansas Medical Center. A full list of the institutions who replied to the survey can be found in Appendix B.

Results

16 of 28 institutions indicated that they have a policy, program, or committee to support OER use on campus. Breaking out by institution type, 7 of 7 Universities (the University of Kansas Medical Center is considered its own type of institution and is not aggregated with the others), 9 of 15 community colleges (Barton, Johnson, Butler, Allen, Kansas City Kansas, Seward, Colby, Cowley, and Coffeyville), and 0 of 5 technical colleges have a policy, program or committee to support OER use. Among those who did not have one established, all but 5 of 14, including the University of Kansas Medical Center, indicated they are exploring the possibility of adding a policy, program, or committee to

support OER. Data show an increase of one policy now known to be in place compared to last year as well as two additional institutions exploring policies.

Respondents ranked the role institutional entities played in coordinating institutional OER initiatives (Figure 1). Library and administration were the most highly ranked. Some other notable partners were information technology and foundation.

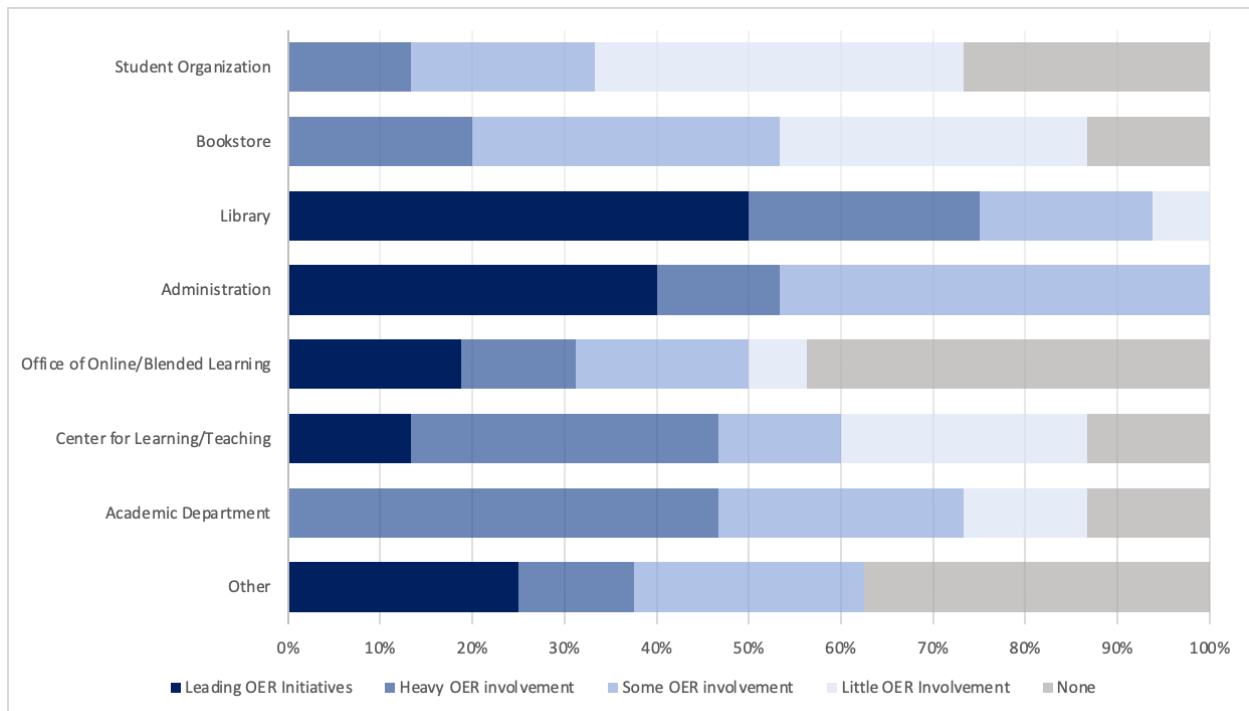


Figure 1. Reported ranking of roles institutional entities played in coordinating institutional OER initiatives

Among the practices that were reported to be in place, Professional Development support, OER Committee/Working Group, and Instructional design support were the most commonly available (Figure 2). 6 of 7 Universities along with Butler County Community College and Colby Community College were the institutions that reported having OER incentive/grant programs or other funding. Compared to 2021, two institutions report no longer having an incentive program (Johnson County and Wichita State), while only one has added a program (Colby).

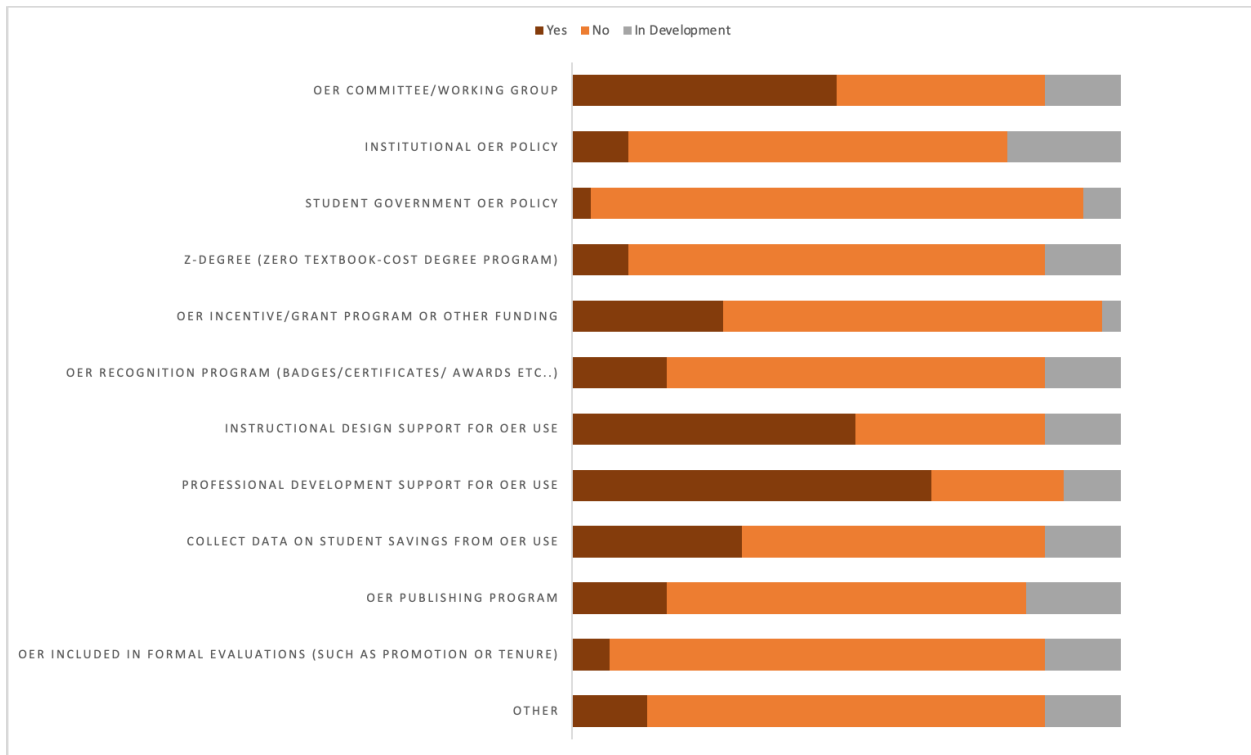


Figure 2. Reported practices currently in place to support OER

The library, bookstore, and administrators were reported to be more aware of OER than students and faculty (Figure 3).

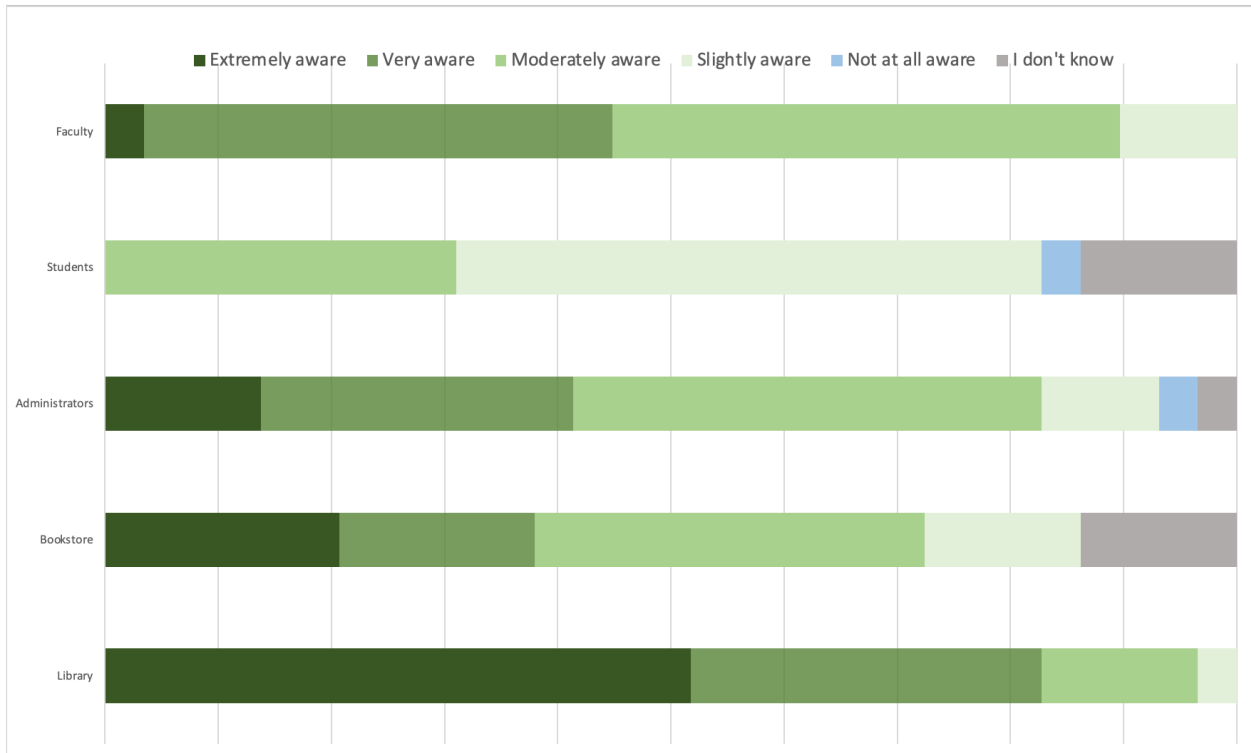


Figure 3. Reported Awareness of OER

Breaking this down by different institution types, reported faculty awareness was higher at community colleges than Universities, but lower at technical colleges (Table 1). Reported student awareness was low and similar among different types of institutions. Reported administrator awareness was similar between universities and community colleges but lower at technical colleges. Reported bookstore awareness was higher at Universities and community colleges than technical colleges. Reported library awareness was higher at community colleges than technical colleges and much higher at Universities.

Table 1. Mean OER Awareness by institution types

Institution Types	Faculty	Students	Administrators	Bookstore	Library
Universities	2.1	1.4	2.4	2.5	3.7
Community Colleges	2.7	1.3	2.5	2.6	3.3
Technical Colleges	1.7	1	2	1.5	2.7

Calculated by assigning scores as follows for responses: 0 - Not aware at all, 1 - Slightly aware, 2 - Moderately aware, 3- Very Aware, 4 - Extremely aware, I don't know - no score assigned.

The reported percentage of instructors at institutions that are utilizing OER as their primary course resource in at least one of their courses is relatively low, with less than 1% and 1-5% the most common responses (Figure 4).

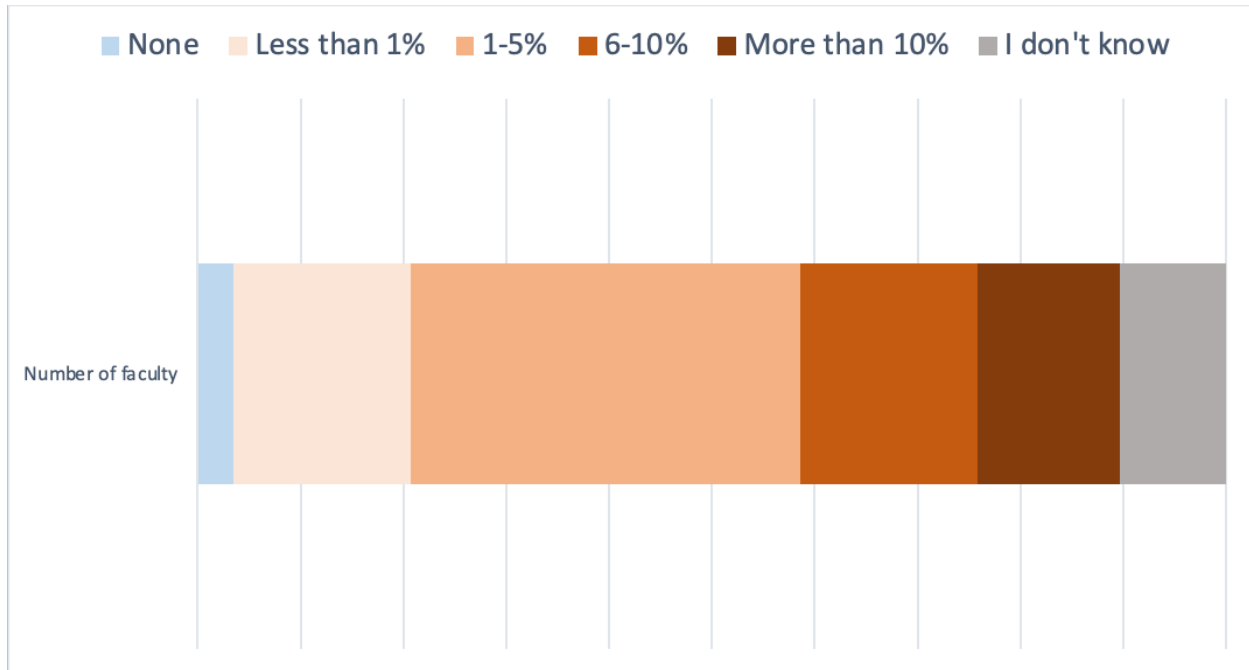


Figure 4. Reported percentage of instructors at institutions that are utilizing OER as their primary course resource in at least one of their courses

All seven Universities have implemented OER/free/low-cost course marking, as well as Barton Community College. Two institutions that indicated that course marking is in development: Butler Community College and Kansas City Kansas Community College.

Most institutions cited a lack of resources as the leading barrier for OER adoption. Universities frequently cited a lack of time and funding for OER to be adopted as well as sustainability concerns, like material review, campus capacity for projects, and the ease with which publishers make material available. University reported challenges can be found in Appendix C. Faculty beliefs and workload were frequently cited as challenges to OER adoption. Perceptions around a lack of buy-in or belief that OER could be secure or of quality were frequently cited by community colleges and technical colleges. Attitudes expressed that were critical of OER security and quality may correspond with frequently cited lack of time and/or resources given to faculty to investigate or develop OER. Full reported challenges for community and technical colleges can be found in Appendices D and E.

Among support or services referenced, Universities most commonly reported that funding/support would help overcome challenges to OER use. Full University responses can be found in Appendix F. Community Colleges also reported funding/support along with education/training would help with overcoming challenges to OER use. Full Community College responses can be found in Appendix G. Technical Colleges

reported that education/training would help with overcoming challenges to OER use. Full Technical College responses can be found in Appendix H.

Conclusion

These survey results will help inform our approach, activities, and strategies as we seek to continue to support the growth and development of OER throughout Kansas higher education. We greatly appreciate the time taken to complete the survey and look forward to conducting similar surveys in the future to understand OER progress and changes throughout the system.

Appendix A

Works Cited

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Appendix B

List of Institutions Participating in the Survey

1. Allen Community College
2. Barton Community College
3. Butler Community College
4. Cloud County Community College
5. Coffeyville Community College
6. Colby Community College
7. Cowley College
8. Dodge City Community College
9. Emporia State University
10. Flint Hills Technical College
11. Fort Hays State University
12. Fort Scott Community College
13. Garden City Community College
14. Highland Community College
15. Hutchinson Community College
16. Independence Community College
17. Johnson County Community College
18. Kansas City Kansas Community College
19. Kansas State University
20. Labette Community College
21. Manhattan Area Technical College
22. North Central Kansas Technical College
23. Pittsburg State University
24. Pratt Community College
25. Seward County Community College
26. University of Kansas
27. University of Kansas Medical Center
28. Washburn University
29. Wichita State University

Appendix C

Reported Challenges (Universities)

- Awareness and understanding of the benefits of OERs to health sciences faculty and learners.
- We do not have a full time person dedicated to OER on campus and there is no indication from administration that this will change.
- Incentive/compensation -The majority of faculty are aware of Open Educational Resources but lack the time to locate and/or adapt the materials to fit their course.
- Right now it's capacity. Loss of staff and supporting current searches has us all spread thin. Requests for information and funding from instructors is down somewhat, which I assume has to do with burnout among them. Just trying to stay afloat.
- Sustainability, Time, Administrative attention.
- Ongoing concerns from faculty regarding quality of materials.
- Infrastructure to support course design (like Pressbooks) and to support OER warehousing (like BePress).
- Time to convert courses to use zero-cost course materials.

Appendix D

Reported Challenges (Community Colleges)

- Faculty time. It takes time to implement and transition to OER.
- Time and money to support the transition for faculty.
- Faculty buy in to believe the products are of the same level of rigor and use.
- Faculty time to review options. Some textbooks are still under lease program and therefore not available for change to OER.
- Time for faculty to review OER and redesign all or portions of a course; worries about, and misunderstandings of, copyright licensing and Creative Commons; some faculty who are interested teach courses that do not have a lot of OER (yet) and they are too overwhelmed to try and create their own from scratch - they would like to see examples and connect with peers at other institutions but are not sure how to do that.
- We recently lost our mini grant incentives, so funding opportunities are more rare now. Many programs have strict textbook procedures, so incorporating OER requires a full department culture change instead of an individual faculty member being willing to try something new.
- Program development funds, especially for faculty release/overload compensation.
- Lack of resources with OER texts, i.e. powerpoints and test banks.
- We have a contract with Cengage which provides low-cost digital textbooks for the vast majority of our classes. This has alleviated the immediate downward pressure of increasing textbook costs. Students pay a low, per-credit-hour fee, approximately \$15 for a 3-credit class.
- The College has not encountered significant challenges.
- The easy access to pre-developed packaged materials from publishers. General expectation that free means "not good."
- Instructors are using some OER but fear that there is not enough content to fill the rigor of the course. Instructors have commented that in classes where students need the repetition/practice a homework system is needed and is usually better when tied to a textbook. I use on-line labs and testing software from my textbook publisher and this software is very important to my classes. Not only do the labs enhance the learning experience, but they help cut on lab costs that would otherwise be passed on to students.
- Faculty interest.
- Suitable resources and supplementals.
- Faculty involvement / awareness / willingness.
- Faculty buy in.

- Currently it has not become an issue for our students as we have a loaner program for our books. The students pay no upfront cost for textbooks (they do pay for codes/consumables). To date this has made it less of an issue and therefore less of a response.
- Availability for more complex courses.

Appendix E

Reported Challenges (Technical Colleges)

- Faculty adoption and the lack of options in the technical areas.
- Ignorance of it. Not having very many OER resources currently available for CTE programs of study.
- Knowing and understanding what OER is.

Appendix F

Support or Services to Help Overcome Identified Challenges (Universities)

- Financial support: staffing, software tools used to facilitate the process.
- Hire at least one full time person to develop and coordinate OER programs.
- Funding to incentivize faculty to locate, adapt, or create their own OER textbook/course/ancillary materials.
- Hiring a dedicated position will help a lot.
- Personnel.
- We will continue educating our faculty.
- Statewide purchase of these systems.
- Course release time for faculty working to convert a course to use zero-cost course materials.

Appendix G

Support or Services to Help Overcome Identified Challenges (Community Colleges)

- I'd be interested in learning and/or having additional support around platforms that would help make the transition process easier for faculty.
- Funding or scholarships.
- We are encouraging review and use of OER as textbook updates come due.
- By now, a lot of our faculty are already aware of OER, its importance, and are willing to use it in their courses, but they struggle with actual "doing." More resources on the "nuts and bolts" of finding, evaluating, and adapting OER for different classrooms in different disciplines, opportunities to connect with peers across the state to talk about OER; professional development support for creating or adapting OER (writing and editing skills, copyright licensing, publishing platforms, etc), and having a centralized body on campus to answer and guide faculty and administration (currently questions are either directed to the library or to Online Ed) would be helpful.
- Funding to implement, release time to convert courses to OER, stronger support for creation of supporting resources (graphics etc. for inclusion/adaptation of OER).
- State OER Development grants for institutions.
- Continued professional development on the use of OERs is appreciated.
- More ancillary materials available for faculty or more funding to help colleges to develop those materials to support the open textbook.
- Training of faculty of where to find the best resources for each curriculum division.
- More training and information.
- Continued access to OER training.
- Further training on the benefits of moving to OER textbooks.
- Development grants.
- Platform for publishing faculty developed OER or OER collaboratively developed.

Appendix H

Support or Services to Help Overcome Identified Challenges (Technical Colleges)

- Not sure.
- Would need more CTE faculty to create OER resources. More professional development for faculty on OER.
- Proper resources.