The HackYourSyllabus Mini-Grant:
A Bite-Sized OER Incentive Program

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NUTRITION INFORMATION

Large-scale financial incentives are not always necessary for the development of a campus-wide OER incentive program supporting and encouraging faculty to adopt, adapt, or create OER. Just as consumption of a heavy mid-day meal can foster somnolence and reduce afternoon productivity, large-scale OER grant programs can result in a significant proportion of library resources being committed to long-term projects requiring ongoing management.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Users following this recipe will dish up a tapas approach to incentive programs, combining financial stipends and instructional design support to enable a nimble approach to the achievement of sustainable goals related to the adoption and modification of OER (Wiley, 2007). This recipe offers the following:

- Describes a library-led initiative supporting faculty redesigning courses to incorporate OER and library resources
- Specifies processes for the design, publication, and implementation of a mini-grant program incentivizing course redesigns
- Provides templates for localization and re-use as needed

NUMBER SERVED

This recipe serves 20 faculty mini-grants per $15,000 of funding but can be easily adjusted in consideration of available resources. Initial numbers served will correspond directly to the number of students involved in the first iteration of courses supported by the mini-grants. Subsequent iterations of the courses will increase the number served, as will dissemination of openly licensed work for use at other institutions.

COOKING TIME

Suggested recipe preparation time includes five months from issuing the call for proposals to reviewing the proposals to best allow ideas to marinate and flavors to mingle as faculty and instructors explore how best to design their proposals. The cooking time, during which the library partners with grant recipients to locate OER and incorporate open practices into their courses, can be anywhere from 1 to 6 months.

DIETARY GUIDELINES

The HackYourSyllabus Mini-Grant encourages faculty and instructors to explore the use of open resources as an alternative to traditional commercially published textbooks and course materials. Faculty are provided a financial incentive and instructional design support for using existing open textbooks in their classes, creating teaching materials ancillary to existing open textbooks, and revising syllabi, assignments, and other course-related resources necessary for the transition to open resources. Participants commit to using the course redesign or subsequent iterations, which incur no cost to students, for at least two years. They will also distribute library-provided student surveys regarding student perceptions of open textbooks and will provide annual feedback regarding the course experience.

The timeline associated with this tapas-approach to incentives can be particularly friendly to non-tenure-track faculty, enabling the library to provide incentive and support for those such as adjunct faculty, instructional staff, and graduate teaching assistants who provide much of the hidden labor associated with the implementation of OER ("Office Hours", 2019). Partnerships between the library and campus stakeholders are strengthened as library representatives actively collaborate with faculty and instruc-

tors throughout the call for proposals, course redesign, and its subsequent implementation and evaluation.

INGREDIENTS & EQUIPMENT

- Project management resources (see Additional Resources below)
- Instructional designer
- Coordinating librarian
- Funding ($750 for each mini-grant)
- HackYourSyllabus workflow (https://trello.com/b/9dSqmgvY/hackyoursyllabus-implementation-design-shared/kathyessmiller/recommend)
- Communications resources
- Publicity plan/pipeline
- Call for proposals (https://info.library.okstate.edu/open/hackyoursyllabus)
- Mini-grant selection criteria
- Mini-grant selection panel
- Memorandum of Understanding template (https://shareok.org/handle/11244/322075)

PREPARATION

1. Craft a statement describing your proposed mini-grant project and tentative timeline. As part of the statement, align the ways in which the use of OER strengthens the teaching and learning experience to institutional values and mission statements. Avoid using jargon and, when possible, use statistics specific to your population. Be succinct. An effective statement will be between 75 and 250 words.
2. Sketch out the broad stages of the project (publicity, call for proposals, selection of recipients, development and implementation of courses) and how they will be distributed through your tentative timeline. Document your plan using your project management resources.
3. Consult with those responsible for your communications resources to develop a plan for publicity and the pipeline through which that publicity will be shared. Add the details of that plan to your project management timeline.
4. Use the statement you crafted in step 1 to develop a call for proposals. Describe the project, the incentives, and elements of the timeline from the call for proposals through implementation of the course. Articulate the criteria for successful proposals, such as course enrollment, fields underrepresented in OER, or incorporation of open practices. Include your contact information and communicate your willingness to help in the development of proposals. Publish the call for proposals in accordance with the plan developed in step 3.
5. Use project management resources to document questions, consultations, and follow-up conversations. Where possible, copy and paste emails (with dates), include detailed notes from phone calls and interviews, and note faculty and instructors expressing interest. Reach out to those submitting applications, offering to work with them to optimize their proposed projects before the applications are evaluated. Careful documentation of each of these interactions will help recognize and measure the value added as a result of this project even beyond the benefits of grant recipients' courses flipped to use OER. If possible, leave the call open for 3–5 months.

COOKING METHOD

1. As soon as possible after the deadline has passed, collect the grant applications along with the published selection criteria and share them with your selection panel. Customize discussion of grant applications for what best suits the time your panel members have available. In some situations, a face-to-face review of the applications will be most beneficial. In others, an independent review of the applications subject to your final selection will be effective. Set a deadline for when you would like to have your panel's input—and stick to it.
2. Notify grant recipients of their selection for the mini-grant, alerting them to an email soon to come which will include next steps. If possible, use individual emails to notify those not selected; identify strengths in their proposals, and communicate your willingness to help them incorporate aspects of their course redesign and/or help them apply for grants available in their content area or elsewhere.
3. Send an individual follow-up email to your grant recipients detailing next-steps, including drafting, finalizing, and signing a Memorandum of Understanding. Attach a draft of your MOU template to this email,

personalized with their name, your name, and the name of their project. Note the aspects of the MOU which most need their attention (a description of the project, their project timeline, and when payment will be made). Offer to meet with them to review the MOU, if necessary. Payment of a portion of the financial incentive will assist in the completion of the MOU. Proceed with the formal project once you have filed a finalized, signed MOU.

4. Set calendar notifications for yourself associated with deliverables as noted on each grant recipient's timeline. As those reminders come up, contact the recipients to celebrate their progress, determine how you can help, and, if necessary, adjust the development timeline.

5. The level of faculty adoption/customization/creation of OER will vary. Using the original course syllabus, curate and suggest OER and library resources that may serve as effective replacements for student-purchased resources. Cool4Ed provides an option through which commercial textbook ISBNs can be used to find open textbooks in Merlot (Cuillier, 2020). Works included in anthologies may be available in the public domain or accessed through the library. Textbook chapter authors will sometimes have published a journal article on the same topic to which the library can provide access; faculty may be unaware of these options and will welcome library assistance locating these resources. Faculty customizing or creating OER will benefit

from assistance locating and evaluating appropriately licensed open materials. Be prepared to offer consultation regarding copyright, public domain, and resources, such as Creative Commons licenses, which communicate permissions broader than those allowed under full copyright.

6. During the semester of course implementation, contact the instructor monthly and assist with design modifications as needed. Set personal calendar notifications for these check-ins as well, so the semester doesn't slip away without your having offered support. Support and assistance with design modifications may take many forms, including continued curation of library resources, technical assistance incorporating new resources into the learning management system or other publication platforms, and awareness of library-provided options such as course reserves and inter-library loan.

7. As the course implementation semester approaches the two-thirds mark, send the instructor links to the surveys students and instructors will use sharing their perspective of the teaching and learning experience.

8. For this recipe, payment of the final installment of the stipend is arranged upon library receipt of an informal faculty report at the conclusion of the course implementation semester.

CHEF'S NOTES
We found that this smaller-scale approach to incentivizing adoption and customization

of OER broadened participation and drew in scholars from fields underrepresented in OER. Proposed projects included updated resources created by gender and women's studies faculty, localization of a resource to reflect nutritional needs and concerns unique to our community, creation of an anthology of diverse flash fiction, inclusion of open pedagogical practices, and creation of innovative course materials using a variety of platforms and techniques as alternatives to a static textbook.

Instructional designers, in addition to having considerable expertise in learning science and curriculum development, are skilled project managers. If necessary, the roles of instructional designer and collaborating librarian can be merged into one. If your modification of the recipe does require this combination, be even more intentional with project management and documentation of process and planning.

Remember to stay in contact (https://trello.com/b/mnkqQPEB/hackyoursyllabus-contacts/kathyessmiller/recommend) with instructors and faculty who reached out to you throughout the grant application process but opted not to apply or did not receive a grant. Much can be accomplished in partnership with those educators, even without the financial incentive.

For hungrier groups, this recipe pairs well with the recipes "Unspoiled Broth: A Memorandum of Understanding for Chefs Cooking

Up OER" and "A Project Management Template for OER Projects."

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- At Oklahoma State University, management of this recipe was accomplished using the free version of Trello (https://trello.com/) and the campus-wide version of Outlook Calendar.
- Grants were submitted using an institutional subscription of Mach Forms (https://www.machform.com/). End-of-semester surveys were created using an institutional subscription of LibWizard (https://springshare.com/libwizard/).
- The coordinating librarian and grant recipients used email to communicate, as it was the channel with which the recipients were already familiar.

RESOURCES

Cuillier, C. (2020). OER toolkit. Retrieved from https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kQdhTy8WMjoAD2SqKuB_quSZwkfwVKHm/view

Iakovakis, C., Essmiller, K., & Upson, M. (2019). Memorandum of understanding template for open educational resources (OER) projects. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.10135043

Rebus Community. (April 29, 2019). Office hours transcript: The invisible labour of OER. Retrieved from https://about.rebus.community/2019/04/29/april-office-hours-defining-the-invisible-labour-of-oer-audio-and-chat-transcripts/

Reed, M., Currier, B., Mirza, R. & Ossom Williamson, P. (2017). Memorandum of understanding for UTA CARES grant program. University of Texas at Arlington Libraries ResearchCommons. Available at http://hdl.handle.net/10106/26740. Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 United States (CC BY-NC).

Wiley, D. (2007). On the sustainability of open educational resources initiatives in higher education. Paper commissioned by the OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) for the project of Open Educational Resources.

Project Management Examples and Templates

- Example Call for Proposals. https://info.library.okstate.edu/open/hackyoursyllabus
- Description of Mini-Grant opportunity (PDF). https://info.library.okstate.edu/ld.php?content_id=48637793
- Grant Application Template. https://osf.io/dbvmh/
- MOU Template. https://shareok.org/handle/11244/322075
- HackYourSyllabus Publicity Trello Board Template. https://trello.com/b/NYrZKquE/hackyoursyllabus-publicity-shared/kathyessmiller/recommend
- HackYourSyllabus Contacts Trello Board Template. https://trello.com/b/mnkqQ-PEB/hackyoursyllabus-contacts/kathyessmiller/recommend
- HackYourSyllabus Workflow Trello Board Template. https://trello.com/b/9dSqmgvY/hackyoursyllabus-implementation-design-shared/kathyessmiller/recommend