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University Libraries

The Evolution of Rutgers University's Open and Affordable Textbook (OAT) Program

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Overview

1. Rutgers University (RU) system

2. History of RU's Open and Affordable Textbooks (OAT) Program

3. Recent developments and changes to the OAT program

4. Student and faculty survey results

5. Future directions per campus

6. Q & A

Camden
- 5,000 undergraduates, 82% receive financial aid

New Brunswick
- Over 33,000 undergraduates, 53% financial aid

Newark
- 8,100 undergraduates, 79% receive financial aid

RBHS
- 2,500 undergraduates, unknown % of financial aid

The Original $1,000 Monitor Stand
Courtesy of Imgur

Textbook Affordability at Rutgers University

- Rutgers-Camden Student initiative since early 2000s

- Faculty Senate Report in 2014

- President Barchi endorses report in 2015; OAT is created

- In May 2019, we completed round 4 of awards

Created by Jojo Ticon from Noun Project

Open and Affordable Textbook (OAT) Program

- Up to 20 incentive awards of $500-$1,000 to faculty/instructors who choose to redesign their courses with open educational resources (OER), library-licensed content, or other open/affordable content

- OAT committee is comprised by representatives from each of the campuses; decisions regarding awards are made in consultation with teaching faculty and students

- So far, around 57 awards have been granted, impacting over 13,000 students and saving them nearly $2.3 million

Selected Projects To Date

Selected OpenStax textbook & developed (open) online quizzes for General Chemistry 115 & 116 (RU-Newark)

NB faculty published an open Microbiology Lab Manual in Rutgers Institutional Repository, RUcore

Psychiatry students created their own course material (RBHS)

The medical school will be publishing an online book in RUcore of student work in a radiology course

Open and Affordable Textbook Program

Recent changes

- Registrar integration

- Tracks that award small classes, as well as faculty already using OER in their classrooms who want to go further

- New award cycle in Spring (vs. Fall)

- Project manager position

Things we are keeping the same:

- At least one representative per campus
- NJPIRG collaboration
- Student and faculty help with selecting winners

Criteria for Awards

Track 1: Introduce open and affordable materials into a large course

Track 2: Enrich a course already using open and affordable materials

Track 3: Introduce open and affordable materials into a small course < 35 students

A [rubric](#) was created for scoring each of these tracks

The student survey

- Survey of students enrolled in OAT courses in Spring 2017, Summer 2017, Fall 2017, and Spring 2018.

- Goal was to assess OAT program and its impact on the student experience.

- Approved by Rutgers University IRB.

- Instructors were asked to share with students each semester.

- Mix of closed and open response questions.

- Only informed consent questions required.

- Received a total of 423 responses.

Student survey overview (1)

- Textbook affordability is clearly a major concern for students at Rutgers.

- Although overall student spending on textbooks was lower than the national average, there are caveats. In addition, results varied according to campus.

- Students support OAT and feel positively about their redesigned courses and course content.

- Students were largely unaware that their course was intended to be low-cost/free.

- For the most part, library resources and services were not prominent in survey responses.

Survey overview (2)

- Students need to be able to identify OAT courses *before* they register.

- The Libraries need to better advertise OAT and other library services related to textbook affordability.

- OAT cannot operate in a vacuum. It affects and is affected by core library services (such as collection development, instruction, course reserves, and interlibrary loan) and their success relies on the investment of stakeholders across the library as well as the OAT committee.

Faculty survey overview (1)

- Assessed the experiences of 56 faculty who were awarded between 2016-2018

- Some of the questions were adapted from the Open Ed Group Toolkit (http://openedgroup.org/toolkit)

- The funds ($500-$1000) were considered adequate for adopting existing OER

- Faculty learn about course material through colleagues in professional networks, followed by colleagues in the department, and publisher advertisements. Librarians are not perceived as a resource for that purpose

- Half of respondents were interested in possibly authoring an open textbook in the future

Faculty survey overview (2)

- Faculty reports wanting editorial assistance in order to be able to publish, as well as greater monetary support. The preferred research fund amount for authoring an open textbook is between $4,500-$30,000

- More support is needed to motivate faculty to author new OER, including greater monetary award and more direct encouragement from campus leadership

- The results also imply that incentives should be customized to the needs and characteristics of the recipients

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Future directions

- Camden: Pressbooks (2 faculty piloting now), NJPIRG push for z-degree programs and a campus-wide textbook affordability committee

- New Brunswick: publishing OER in Pressbooks, faculty OER learning community

- Newark: Pressbooks pilot

- RBHS: Collaboration with Curriculum Committees of the Seven School of RBHS

- All: Promote OAT directly to students

Questions?

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