

## **Affordable Learning Solutions, California State University, Stanislaus**

### **Final Report**

August 31, 2014

The Affordable Learning Solutions project team offered two workshops to faculty in order to introduce the California State University ALS initiative and promote materials and strategies to introduce Open Educational Resources as possible alternatives to expensive print textbooks.

The first workshop, in June 2013 took place over two days, Monday, June 3, 9:00am -4:00 and Tuesday, June 4, from 9:00am to 12:30pm. The second workshop was conducted during the Fall 2013 semester and consisted of five sessions on alternate Wednesdays from September 25 to the final session on December 4.

Each workshop consisted of the following topics and activities:

- Introduction to the Affordable Learning Solutions Initiative and to Open Educational Resources
- A focus group discussion which include all participants, workshop presenters, the bookstore manager, our campus Assistive Technologies Coordinator, a student representing Disabilities Services, librarians, and the Faculty Development Coordinator.
  - See Appendices One and Three for more information about the focus group discussions.
- Demonstrations of CSU and University Library resources
- Presentations by the campus bookstore manager about Rent Digital program, availability of e-textbooks and used texts.
- Presentations by campus Accessible Technology Coordinator
- Demonstrations of computer programs and apps that can be used to facilitate the use of OER.

Participants in each workshop could “check out” an iPad from the library in order to experiment with useful apps, and to explore tablet computers as a resource.

At the conclusion of each workshop, participants came together for a working dinner to discuss the experience and report on the progress of devising strategies to incorporate less expensive or free materials for their students. Participants also completed surveys to rate the usefulness of the workshop components and indicated a high rate of satisfaction for all topics and activities. Results of the surveys may be viewed in Appendices Two and Four.

In order to make information from this workshop available to the broader campus audience, a workshop guide was created. The guide is linked from the Faculty Services Webpage and is discoverable through a search of the library and campus webpages. The guide includes

information about copyright, accessibility, information about online library resources, links to e-texts, and a showcase for faculty using these lower cost materials. The guide may be viewed at <http://libguides.csustan.edu/affordablelearning>

### Savings generated by ALS participants, fall 2013

Faculty	Class	Total students	Cost of old texts	Cost of ALS texts	Savings per student	Total Savings
Augustine Avwunudiogba	GEOG 3250	43	\$147.00	\$0--material free online	\$147.00	\$6321
Ann Strahm	SOCL 3310	23	\$134.00	\$34.00	\$100.00	\$2300
Valerie Leyva	SW 5032	28	\$77.00	*varied	*varied	\$1344*
Kelvin Jasek-Rysdahl	ECON 2500	70	\$100.00	\$0--material free online	\$100.00	\$7000

\*figure represents an average savings per student.

### Savings Generated by ALS participants Spring 2014

Faculty	Class	Total students	Cost of old texts	Cost of ALS texts	Savings per student	Total Savings
Brent Powell	KINS 4330	40	\$50.00	Material is free online \$0	\$50.00	\$2000.00
Ann Strahm	SOCL 3310	25	\$134.00	\$34.00	\$100.00	\$2500.00
Kelvin Jasek-Rysdahl	ECON 2500	40	\$100.00	\$0--material free online	\$100.00	\$4000

### Savings Projected for Summer and Fall 2014

Faculty	Class	Total students	Cost of old texts	Cost of ALS texts	Savings per student	Total Savings
Mark Grobner	BIOL	70	\$110.00	All materials free online \$0	\$110	\$7700.00
Brent Powell	KINS 4330	80	\$50.00	All materials free online \$0	\$50.00	\$4000
Koni Stone	CHEM 4400	36	\$250.00	\$75.00*	\$175.00*	\$6300.00*
Stuart Wooley	BOTY 4000	55	\$125.00	\$12.00	\$113.00	\$6315.00
Abu Mboka	CJ 3650	35	\$58.00	\$0	\$58.00	\$2030.00

\*average cost and savings

## **Faculty Showcase Project, summer 2014**

Many faculty expressed interest in the ALS Workshops and the concept of including more free and reduced materials in their courses. In order to discover how faculty were working towards that goal, the ALS team sought information about practices adopted by our faculty to decrease the cost of course materials for students. A stipend of \$100 per class was offered to faculty for narratives about their cost saving endeavors. Eleven faculty provided profiles, employing a variety of cost saving methods. One professor even goes so far as to purchase inexpensive copies of his methods textbook, and loans them out free to needy students. He reports that so far, the students always return them.

### **Listing of profile participants and estimated savings per student:**

#### **Dr. Ian Littlewood**

PHYS 3080, PHYS 3550, PHYS 4900 and PHYS 3010

Dr. Littlewood creates class pages which list the online resources he expects students to use and provides extensive online notes for the students. Most importantly, he allows students to use older editions of the course text. Says Dr. Littlewood, "Using an earlier edition of a textbook rarely poses a problem, as the differences between editions are usually small. Using online resources can actually improve learning, as the students become adept at searching out and evaluating material," (GE goal 4).

Savings per student: Between \$60 to \$200.

#### **Dr. Scott Russell**

CHEM 1110 and 2010

For CHEM 2010, Dr. Russell switched to a less expensive text. Students can purchase the previous edition, since the older edition does not differ significantly from the most recent one, sometime saving as much as \$150. CHEM 1110 students use an online homework systems created by Dr. Russell in Blackboard instead of a \$50 commercially available homework system. His system utilizes free online videos to review concepts and strategies that help students review material they will need to know for their final exam.

Savings per student: \$50-\$150.

#### **Dr. Elvin Aleman**

Physical Chemistry

Dr. Aleman used a chemistry text offering an online option for just \$99, compared to the \$297 print version. However, none of the students purchased the online book, preferring the print in spite of the cost. In response to student preference and still seeking to find a way to reduce costs for students, Dr. Aleman adopted a new print textbook priced new at just \$73. The less

expensive text efficiently explained concepts, providing excellent examples and exercises. Compared with previous years, students are more satisfied with the new book.

Savings per student: As much as \$224.

**Dr. Paul O'Brien**

SOCL 3820 and SOCL 3150

Students taking Dr. O'Brien's Sociology 3150 classes will appreciate his strategy of using the 16th edition of the textbook, *Families in Transition*, instead of the costlier newer editions. Sociology 3820 students may also purchase an older edition of *The Sociology of Food and Nutrition*.

Savings per student: \$25-\$35.

**Dr. Chris Nagal**

PHIL 4401 and PHIL 4430

Dr. Nagal says it best:

"I was concerned about costs and quality of textbooks for Professional Ethics. I used an anthology of essays, and although there were excellent essays in the textbook, the text did not reflect changes in professional work over the years. I built an anthology that met that requirement, by utilizing the university library's electronic journals. The text is composed of articles that enrolled students have access to through the library. They pay nothing additional, and I can modify the course text on an ongoing basis to keep up to date and to respond to student needs. I did the same thing for Bioethics, focusing the text on medical ethics issues of primary concern to the nursing students who were the predominant student population. Students use mobile computing devices, laptops, or print the articles out to use them in class discussion. It's well-received because of the cost, but also because students can have access to the text wherever they have Internet access. Students use the electronic text a variety of ways. For example, a few copy and paste article text into their class notes, so as to have a commentary or gloss on the text for studying. Students also copy and paste article text into email messages to ask about interpreting those passages."

Savings per student: \$90

**Mark Perry, MPA, MA**

CJ 2250

Students have several \$\$ saving options made available by Mr. Perry. Extra copies of the text are placed on reserve in the University Library and a few copies are made available during class time for students to share. Previous, less expensive editions of the required text are acceptable for

class use, for a savings of \$50-\$70 per text. Class material is also posted on the class Blackboard page to assist in learning and study.

Savings per student: \$50-\$70.

**Dr. Vickie Harvey**

COMM 3100

Students in Dr. Harvey's class expressed concern about the cost and quality of the selected text for this class. In response, a less expensive text with a stronger academic foundation was selected. This switch reduced the cost of the text book in this class from \$119 to \$77.

Savings per student: \$34.

**Dr. Cathlin Davis**

LIBS 3000

Previously, this class used an anthology of readings priced at \$40. While this is not extraordinarily expensive, Dr. Davis and her colleagues found that all but one of the readings was available through the databases in the library. The students now access these articles for free, without having to buy a book at all!

Dr. Davis lists three advantages (besides cost) to utilizing the databases for reading material:

1. Students get very good at using the databases
2. Students no longer think the readings are all by one author
3. Readings can be changed and updated with very little effort
4. Students don't have to print anything, as they can read all the materials online

Savings per student: \$40.

**Dr. Greg Morris**

Criminal Justice, CJ 2255, CJ 3170, CJ 5201

For each of these methods course, Dr. Morris utilizes older editions of the primary course text for which the current edition costs about \$200. Older editions can be found for as little as \$14.00.

CJ 3120 Causes of Crime

Again, the use of previous editions of the course text saves students a substantial amount of \$\$.

CJ 5200 Advanced Statistics in Criminal Justice

Students enrolled in this course are able to utilize material available in the Social Science Research and Instruction Center, made available to CSU students, faculty and staff through an institutional license.

In addition to the cost saving strategies above, Dr. Morris buys used copies of his required texts and loans them to students on an as needed basis. He reports that students always return the books!

Savings per student: \$100.

### **Dr. Chad Stessman**

CHEM 3090 Chemistry in the Elementary School Classroom

Realizing that his students often tried to get through his class without buying the expensive required textbook, Dr. Stessman has switched to using an e-textbook published online by Flat World Knowledge. Students can purchase the text in whatever format works best for them, from an inexpensive e-text (\$39.00), a black and white printed version (\$59.00) or a printed full color version (\$139.00).

The most current edition of the previously required text cost \$186.00, so the new text saves students a considerable amount of money.

Savings per student: As much as \$82.

### **Dr. Nhy Y Stessman**

Organic Chemistry I and Organic Chemistry II

The cost of textbooks in the sciences has skyrocketed in recent years. To combat the trend, a new text was adopted which allows students to purchase the text in a hardcover edition (most expensive), a loose leaf format (\$100 less expensive), or as an e-text (savings of over \$150). In addition, students can buy older versions of the required text which are available for a reduced cost.

As an aside, students report that they generally like the newly adopted textbook much better!

Savings per student: Over \$150 if they buy the e-text.

\

Find the class profiles on our Libguide here: <http://libguides.csustan.edu/FacShowcase>

Maryann Hight, MLIS  
Associate Librarian  
Coordinator, Affordable Learning Solutions  
CSU Stanislaus  
Turlock, CA 95380  
[mhight@csustan.edu](mailto:mhight@csustan.edu)

## Appendix One

### Focus group discussion responses, Summer Workshop

1. Where do you find information about digital resources
  - a. Wikipedia, bibliographies
  - b. favorite sites, think tanks, non-profits, United Nations, disciplinary sites
  - c. start with Google, then dissertations and theses
  - d. Google scholar, library website databases, links from friends.
2. How user friendly are such materials?
  - a. Library e-books: single user model is a big pain
  - b. Don't like reading on the device but for students they have advantages
3. What pedagogical obstacles do you encounter when considering the switch to digital?
  - a. Publishers of e-texts are inflexible
  - b. Need for devices—they should buy us iPads!
  - c. Question of permanence of materials
  - d. Major obstacle is the time required to research and utilize materials
  - e. Time spent showing students how to utilize digital materials, software and hardware
  - f. Software issues
4. Do you have a personal preference for print versus digital?
  - a. Depends on the context
  - b. Depends on how you want to engage, like to read on a device such as Kindle or iPad for recreational use, but prefer print texts for subject study
5. What is your perception of student attitudes about switching to digital texts or resources?
  - a. Some student have no internet at home
  - b. Free is nice, but many students get charged for bandwidth at home
6. Related issues to #5:
  - a. Inform students where they can go for free internet
  - b. Some students complain about no post-class access w/digital rental, and students think digital rental should be much cheaper
  - c. Try to offer students all options—students should to be able to make decisions about access that are best for them.
7. What kind of information would you want about rent digital, OER materials or other digital materials before you decided to replace traditional texts?
  - a. Is it scalable?
  - b. What resources are available on campus?
8. Can you tell if students engage more with one type of material or another?
  - a. Make sure to offer multiple ways to acquire knowledge the students are more engaged.
  - b. Offer interactivity and animation



## Appendix Two

### Workshop Evaluation Responses, June 3 and 5, 2013\*

#### Discovering and Utilizing Resources for Affordable Learning

1. What was the most helpful aspect of this workshop?
  - Having a dedicated day and ½ to sit in a big room and learn, collaborate and explore the variety of tools, websites, apps, and teaching methods
  - Really exploring the resources on the library website. I had no idea.
  - Hands on and references
  - I learned that librarians are cool and a wealth of information to help enhance instruction.
  - I found all the workshop sessions very helpful. They complimented each other and made it very enriching
  - Betsy's tool/programs for online annotation and Ann's iPad apps. These were helpful because they are actually used by them in classes and makes it a real app, program or website to use.
  - The general ideas and information that people shared.
  
2. We are planning a second ALS workshop in the fall. However, the sessions will be spread out over a series of weeks. Do you have any suggestions for the workshop planners?
  - You could video tape each presenter's presentation and have attendee's watch these, then come to a 3-hour meeting prepared to discuss.
  - I have found that so many faculty have great ideas. It might be helpful to ask participants to be prepped to present their best idea or resource.
  - I would bring participants from this workshop to present ideas they have put to practice.
  - Repeat the topics multiple days to accommodate people with different teaching schedules.
  - I think it would be helpful to have everyone set up an Evernote and WebKipper account while in training and for them to start saving and using items for their classes while in [this] class

3. Please rate the elements of this workshop

	Very helpful	Helpful	Not Helpful	I already knew this
“Homework” about copyright	3	3		
Focus group discussion	3	3		
Presentation by Tawn Gillihan, ATI Coordinator	2	4		
Presentation about electronic resources by John Brandt	3	3		
Presentation by Amy Lewis, bookstore manager	1	4	1	
Demo of iPad apps by Ann Strahm	5	1		
Presentation of ALS resources by Maryann Hight	4	1		One participant did not respond
Time allocated to explore resources and ask questions	4	2		

\*All six of faculty participants responded to the survey.

## **Appendix Three**

### **Discovering and Utilizing Resources for Affordable Learning**

#### **Fall Workshop, August 25, 2013**

Discussion of obstacles encountered with a switch from traditional textbooks to OER resources:

- Time—it takes lots of time to hunt down materials that cover a large amount of material
- Students may have limited access to materials because of Wi-Fi access, restrictions on data use, lack of computers, iPads or even smart phones
- Access for students with disabilities may also be an issue (no captioning, no audio)

Disadvantages of traditional textbook format (print or digital):

- One size fits all approach doesn't work for students or faculty. Sometimes textbook publishers make the textbooks extremely general or broad so they can be used for a number of disciplines. This results in only a few chapters being useful, and leads to purchase or use of multiple texts.

Advantages of traditional textbook format:

- Someone else has done all the work!
- Connections and transitions between the topics are created for the student

Where do you find Open Access Resources?

- University Library (yah!) for journal articles
- Government agencies
- Major research hospitals
- Khan Academy
- Searching Google

Other discussion items:

Students are finding videos online to explain basic concepts, even when the professors don't have time to do it.

Our goal is student success so making content available in a number of ways, in order to give students choices, is a GOOD thing.

We need better ways during the registration process to inform students that online access is necessary for class participation (not just that the class is online, or that the books may be online)

While some students have no problems switching to working in a digital mode, many prefer print and will still buy a more expensive textbook.

## Appendix Four

### Discovering and Utilizing Resources for Affordable Learning Fall Workshop 2013 Evaluation\*

4. Please rate the elements of this workshop

	Very helpful	Helpful	Not Helpful	I already knew this
“Homework” about copyright	2	1		
Focus group discussions (First and last sessions)	3			
Presentation by Tawn Gillihan, ATI Coordinator	1	1		
Presentation about electronic resources by John Brandt	1	2		
Presentation by Amy Lewis, bookstore manager	1	1		1
Presentations by former ALS workshop faculty (Ann and Brent)	3			
Time allocated to explore resources and ask questions	2	1		

5. What was the most helpful aspect of this workshop?

- Presentations by former ALS workshop participants
- Use of iPad
- Introduction to new technology
- Presentation by Librarian John Brandt (electronic resources)

6. Do you have any suggestions for future workshops?

- Continuous updating of tips would be helpful

\*Three of four workshop participants responded to the survey.