

OPEN@WRLC FACULTY COURSE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM

PILOT CYCLE I REPORT

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PART I: WRLC REPORT

- **Executive Summary**

In 2022, at the direction of the Library Directors Council and Steering Committee, the Textbook Affordability Working Group was tasked with building on early successes to establish a more extensive open educational resources (OER) program. This program was developed based on years of research and coordination with regional consortia like VIVA and USMD that were already providing more robust programming. The result was a project that would provide a range of grants to foster course adoption, adaptation, and creation based on existing and newly published open educational resources. Funding for the pilot phase in fiscal years 2024 and 2025 would be provided by WRLC using the \$250,000 Executive Director's Catalyst Fund or other cost-neutral sources.

Based on consultation with coordinators of existing OER programs and membership in national groups like the Open Educational Network, a budget for the project was developed that included money for grants, membership fees, infrastructure for publishing and hosting, and a grants coordinator position to handle administrative tasks. During the WRLC budget adoption process for that year and partly in response to the need to cover unexpected HVAC replacement with existing funds, the OER pilot was revised down to only cover the adoption of existing OER content. The publishing infrastructure and coordinator position were shelved and the administrative work of the pilot phase would be covered by existing WRLC staff.

Angelique Carson had recently been hired as the Shared Collections Librarian at WRLC after serving as the chair of the Textbook Affordability Working Group in her previous position at Howard University. She was closely involved with the creation of the project to that point and could step in and provide much of the coordination that was required. In addition, Joel Shields provided a wealth of experience in designing the web applications that would allow for grant submission, training, tracking, and other support. Details of their contributions can be found in the full version of the pilot report.

The full pilot final report also details some challenges that the group faced in two years of grant management. The biggest challenge was uneven participation from the 9 partners and the impact that had on WRLC staffing commitments. Some WRLC partner institutions did not have any grant recipients or applicants in either year of the pilot project while other institutions stopped sending representatives to the working group despite having faculty in the grant process. This lack of partner engagement put a significant burden on WRLC staff to communicate with faculty about upcoming deadlines, payments, and required materials.

This administrative burden was not necessarily a surprise. During the planning phase, OER program managers stressed the workload of grant tracking and the need for a dedicated grant coordinator position. As the two-year pilot phase comes to a close, subsequent years of the program will need to become a funded item in the WRLC budget and funding must include a dedicated coordinator position. The work of WRLC and the participating TAWG members resulted in more than 1000 students receiving combined savings of over \$100,000 in textbook costs in the first year alone. More details from two successful years of OER work are detailed in the full pilot cycle final report which can be found below.

- **2022 Steering Committee Initiative**

This report outlines the successes and challenges of the first cycle of the two- year Open Educational Resource (OER) Open@WRLC Faculty Course Transformation (FCT) pilot program. This program was assigned to the Textbook Affordability Working Program (TAWG) by the 2022 Steering Committee through the initiative: *“Identify and/or create faculty grant opportunities to support adoption, adaptation and creation of no-cost or low-cost materials for courses offered by the WRLC partners.”*

GOALS

- Advance educational equity at WRLC institutions by providing centralized financial support for the adoption and creation of Open Educational Resources (OER)
- Build a sustainable infrastructure to support the Open@WRLC grant program, products, resources, and training
- Support the integration and creation of OER material to reduce the direct costs to students and contribute to their retention, progression, and graduation.
- Establish a sustainable OER community of WRLC partners that promotes sharing of OER expertise, Open Pedagogy, and highlights the opportunities of OER to address diversity and inclusion in courseware material.

TAWG representatives are deeply concerned that the enthusiasm and interest in the pilot program will be significantly impeded if forced to pause at the conclusion of the second pilot year. To preserve the program’s momentum, and avoid the significant labor required to relaunch, TAWG requests that the program continue to be funded, at the current Adopt level award tier, for an additional year.

- **Program History**

TAWG began its efforts to address textbook affordability in 2019 when the consortium became an affiliate of the [Open Education Network](#) (OEN), based in the Center for Open Education at the University of Minnesota. Since then, in addition to launching the Faculty Course Transformation (FCT) pilot program, TAWG has provided a full series of workshops and panel discussions. This programming has provided WRLC faculty and their support teams the opportunity to demystify OER and promote knowledge-sharing expertise as fellow WRLC faculty, who have personally observed the benefits of open textbooks in their classrooms, share their experiences of how OER has directly impacted student success and retention.

In addition to education, training, resources and support, membership to the Open Education Network has provided the infrastructure for TAWG’s OER textbook review stipend program- a highly effective program designed to incentivize faculty interest. Instructors who attend the workshops are eligible to earn a \$200.00 stipend (funded by the WRLC) by submitting a review of a textbook included in the [Open Textbook Library](#) (OTL). The OTL, curated by the Open

Education Network, is an OER repository considered the gold standard in open access, peer-reviewed, postsecondary material.

The Open Educational Network estimates that 40% of faculty who submit a review to the OTL go on to adopt OER material. This has proven to be true in TAWG's experience. To date, 384 faculty members, from across the consortium, have submitted 160 reviews to the OTL. Combined with the second pilot cycle, approximately 45 instructors have adopted OER material-yielding over \$484,981.00 in reported student course material savings. Faculty, who have attended workshops and participated in the OTL stipend program, were eager to take advantage of OER, but often lacked the time to redesign their courses. Given TAWG's success record, there was broad support to grow the program by providing larger incentives to adopt open education resources. The WRLC's Catalyst budget and other existing monies were provided as a funding source so that the assessment was unaffected by this program.

- **Investigative Research: Program Requirements and Recommendations**

TAWG members initiated a systematic research gathering campaign. Members requested informational interviews with numerous successful OER grant programs, sponsored by other consortia and universities, to inform budget costs, textbook savings, program infrastructure, documentation, sustainability, recommended support and ROI projections. The support staff for these programs provided additional institutional history regarding their program's feedback from faculty and students, annual reports and, in several cases, supporting documentation. Most of these programs had been initiated within the past 7-10 years and the librarians were openly candid in sharing both success stories and potential pitfalls to avoid. Cooperating postsecondary institutional organizations included:

- [University System of Maryland \(USMD\): Maryland Open Source Textbook Initiative](#)
- [The Virtual Library of Virginia \(VIVA\): VIVA Open](#)
- [Affordable Learning Georgia](#)
- [Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois \(CARLI\): Open Illinois Initiative](#)
- [Private Academic Library Network of Indiana \(PALND\): PALSave](#)
- [The Louisiana Library Network \(LOUIS\): Affordable Learning LOUISiana Initiative](#)
- [The State University of New York \(SUNY\): SUNY OER Services](#)
- [HBCU Affordable Learning Solutions](#)
- [Bethune Cookman University: OER Initiative](#)
 - Bethune Cookman's highly effective, institutional-wide pivot to OER adoption was especially inspiring. In 2020, Bethune Cookman University, an HBCU founded in 1904, was struggling to remain open. Enrollment had dropped by 20% in 2020 and in 2019, the University had received 40% fewer applications than in 2018. In March 2020, the University launched an OER initiative that replaced all textbooks for General Education courses with OER material, generating approximately \$4,168,500.00 in textbook savings in the first year of the program.

TAWG's research directly informed the two year pilot program's overall structure. This included a recommendation to budget for consultation services, in the first year of the program, to assist

with the application evaluation process. The interviewed staff repeatedly mentioned another specific budget item regarding the remarkable amount of administrative labor that would be required to successfully run the program. With one consortial program administrator sharing, “Whatever support you think you’re going to need- double it.”

While TAWG members would be expected to assist with stewarding their faculty throughout the program, the program’s infrastructure, including all required supporting documentation, would need to be created to fit the WRLC’s needs. That work included but was not limited to: drafting all required material for the program’s informational site, [Open@WRLC: Faculty Course Transformation](#), and creating a dedicated administrative online portal to assist with the labor of organizing the candidates’ application submissions, evaluation and selection process and various program management deliverables.

Administrative support was also necessary to monitor all program communication from participating stakeholders (including TAWG members, candidates and various home institution departments), manage track faculty progress, draft OER professional development instructional documentation, assist with fund disbursement and review final projects to ensure they met program Creative Commons License and Digital Accessibility standards.

- **Program Budget History**

The informational interviews directly informed the original Open@WRLC Faculty Course Transformation five-year budget plan. At this time, the WRLC was already funding the ongoing OER programming costs of OEN membership and budget for disbursing \$200.00 faculty stipend textbook reviews to the OTL. Similar to fellow OER consortium-wide programs, such as [VIVA Open Grants](#) and [USMD Maryland Open Source Textbook Initiative](#), the original Open@WRLC Faculty Course Transformation proposed budget also offered three levels of grant-based support to instructors: Adopt, Adapt and Create, with each tier providing an increased award amount to address the labor required to transform the course to OER.

The three tiered award program budget included a dedicated WRLC [OER Commons](#) microsite, [ISKME](#) (Institute for the Study and Knowledge Management In Education) services to provide a publishing platform and faculty professional development for OER textbook adaptation, creation. At the advice of the interviewed grant program representatives, who explicitly stressed the necessity of dedicated staffing to manage the program’s administrative responsibilities, a part-time administrative assistant position was added to the budget to assist with OER reference, resource technology and other program management tasks. The proposal was presented to the WRLC Finance Committee on April 21, 2022, to the WRLC Board of Directors on May 2, 2022, and to the Library Directors Council on May 6, 2022. The budget’s five year projected costs, if operationalized after the initial pilot years, totaled \$977,960.00 with an estimated textbook savings of \$1,871,011.00; [OER Original Financial Schedule](#).

The WRLC Board of Directors unanimously approved funding for the Open@WRLC Faculty Course Transformation (FCT) program. Pilot years one and two, FY23 and FY24, were to be completely funded by the WRLC, with no contribution from the partnering institutions’ assessment, and would be sourced from the WRLC Catalyst Fund plus a \$60,000.00 annual

contribution from the profits earned from services to Trinity Washington University. The proposal included the strongly advised budget for administrative support and projected approximately 12,473 students would be provided OER textbooks. TAWG calculated a ratio of expenditures to student savings of 1.98- with textbook savings nearly doubling the five year investment. However, the Library Directors Council expressed concern regarding the total five year cost.

As the most critical piece of the project is fostering OER adoption, in an effort to save the program TAWG redrafted the budget with only one award tier, Adopt. They also eliminated most of the advised budget costs such as administrative support, professional development instruction, an OER Commons repository, and ISKME publishing platform services. With the removal of the prescribed support services, the program's operational labor was passed along to WRLC staff and TAWG representatives. The budget provided for awards to make up the vast majority of funding outlay and overall program costs were cut by over 80%; [Adopt-Only Reduced OER Program Budget](#). Meanwhile, the Adopt tier award program expenditures remained at projected levels. TAWG calculated that the updated program budget increased the ratio of student savings to program expenditure from 1.98 to 2.38.

- **Program Support Infrastructure: WRLC and TAWG**

TAWG representatives have done tremendous work to ensure the program's success. Members have advocated at their home institutions about the value of OER, educated their campus communities on how to locate resources ideal for their course needs and several have completed certificate programs in Open Librarianship and Digital Accessibility. Throughout both pilot years, they have continued to diligently work closely with their awardees to maintain progress updates, webinar instruction and guidance related to project requirements. At most libraries, they have acted as the sole OER contact for their institution while providing support to the new pilot program, adding additional duties to their existing responsibilities.

The loss of dedicated administrative staff has been significant and has also required a considerable amount of labor from the WRLC. WRLC staff do not have the supervisory authority to ensure that TAWG representatives participate in group projects and programming responsibilities, which include meeting attendance, participation and maintaining faculty support through progress meetings and consistent communication. This essential support is necessary for ensuring awardees are meeting benchmarks, completing all program requirements, submitting promised projects on schedule and assisting with fund disbursement.

Additionally, onboarding new TAWG representatives is an involved process that includes providing a comprehensive introduction to OER while continuing to assist the institution's faculty with all programming obligations. When, and if, a new TAWG representative is reassigned to the group, the orientation process often takes place while the new staff is simultaneously onboarding at their home institution. Therefore, the amount of time and attention new staff can provide to the program, and their institution's awardee, is understandably

impacted. During this time, the WRLC staff have continued to support faculty as they work to complete the program.

- **WRLC HQ Staff Administrative Support**

During Pilot Cycle I, WRLC staff provided administrative support, programming content and documentation, professional development material, one-on-one OER discovery reference assistance, progress update meetings, workshops, and created a candidate online portal. Furthermore, WRLC staff acted as primary contact for all programming concerns. This work included but was not limited to:

- Open@WRLC program information site
 - Supporting documentation
 - Call for Proposals
 - Application material and corresponding instructions
 - Eligibility Criteria
 - Participation Requirements
 - Rubric
 - MOU
 - Grants/Business Office Acknowledgement
 - Project Plan Proposal
 - Semester Data Report
 - WRLC newsletter articles, including Call for Proposals and award announcements
 - Self-guided professional development program material (available via portal); similar to programming at fellow postsecondary institutions, the Open@WRLC FCT program includes OER training to help ensure awardees understand various critical components of working with OER, subscribe to recommended guidelines and optimize their transformed courseware material
 - OER Discovery
 - Open Pedagogy
 - Creative Commons License
 - Digital Accessibility
- Webinar presentations; routinely meeting one-on-one with awardees who were not able to attend or did not have an assigned TAWG representative
 - Informational meetings
 - Awardee Kick-off meetings
 - Progress update meetings
- Evaluation process
 - Secured evaluation consultant

- Solicited participation from WRLC institutions
- Scheduled and organized evaluation meetings
- Prepared evaluation materials and calculated rubric totals for evaluators
- Reviewed applications and organized evaluation process
- Forwarded award announcements to awardees and institution's stakeholders
- Provided timeline, program benchmarks, reminders and follow-up to ensure awardees and their TAWG representatives submitted project deliverables in a timely manner
- Routinely acted as primary contact for program concerns/questions, for both TAWG representatives and their awardees
- Managed fund disbursements
- Provided Letters of Recommendation

- **Programming Website, Candidate Portal and Marketing Support**

Website Development A comprehensive website (<https://open.wrlc.org>) was developed to serve as the public face of the Open@WRLC FCT Program. This website is dynamic and expandable, designed to manage various aspects of the program, including:

- **Application Management:** The website collects candidate applications and notifies awardees.
- **Progress Reporting:** It tracks progress reports and milestones for each cohort.
- **Analytics and ROI Tracking:** The website includes analytics to measure the impact of completed awards on classroom outcomes.
- **Archiving and Resources:** Recorded events and workshops are archived on the site for future reference.

The website development required expertise in CSS, JavaScript, PHP, Photoshop, and Drupal Administration. The initial implementation of the website required significant staff time and resources.

Advertising and Promotion An advertising video was created to promote the Open@WRL FCT program. The video production involved:

- Scriptwriting
- Image and video creation
- Music composition
- Narration recording
- Video editing

These promotional efforts are crucial to attracting faculty participation and ensuring the program's visibility across the institution. Additionally, a custom logo for the program was designed to ensure brand consistency and visibility.

Training and Workshops The Open@WRLC FCT program included a series of workshops designed to train faculty on the use of OER materials. The efforts included:

- **Invitation and Attendance Management:** A platform was developed to send mass invitations to over 1,000 faculty members, track attendance, and send follow-up reminders.
- **Workshop Facilitation:** All workshops were scheduled, administered via Zoom, recorded, and archived. Closed captioning was added to ensure accessibility, and the recordings were uploaded to YouTube and linked on the website.

This process required significant time and effort, including attending all workshops, monitoring technology, and moderating meetings.

Open@WRLC FCT Program Management A centralized online system was created to manage the program. Key components include:

- **Online Submission Forms:** Designed to collect candidate applications, including an email notification process for the review team.
- **Faculty Recruitment:** Assisted in recruiting faculty members to participate in the The Open@WRLC FCT program.
- **Evaluation Tracking:** A tracking system was developed on the website to evaluate submissions, including a rubric for automatic scoring of applications.
- **Progress Reporting and Payment Tracking:** Online tools were created to track faculty progress, report milestones, and manage payment notifications.

Return on Investment (ROI) Tracking A system was developed to track the ROI based on final reports from participating faculty. This data is crucial for demonstrating the program's effectiveness and justifying future funding. The development and management of the Open@WRLC FCT program has required substantial time, effort, and expertise, resulting in significant time away from regular duties. The successful implementation of this program has already demonstrated its potential impact on faculty engagement and student success. Continued funding is essential to maintain and expand this program, ensuring that it can reach its full potential in transforming educational resources and outcomes.

Pilot Cycle I Textbook Statistics

	Instructor	OER Transformed Course	OER Implementation			No. of Students	Original Course Material Cost	Textbook Savings
			F 23		F 24			
AU	Krisztina Domjan	ELTA 081 Introduction to Graduate Academic Writing	F 23		F 24	15	\$45	\$675
	James Quirk	GOVT 210 Political Power and American Public Policy	F 23		F 24	200	\$179	\$35,800
CU	Kathryn Degnan	PSY 705 Statistical Methods I		S 24	F 24	15	\$362 (average) \$90 (optional)	\$6,780
GA	Adebowale Ogunjirin	BIO 204 Anatomy and Physiology for Human Services Majors		S 24		20	\$250	\$5,000
GT								
GM								
GW	Elizabeth Chacko	GEOG 1001 Introduction to Human Geography		S 24		120	\$160	\$19,200
HU	Roberto De Leo	MATH 164 Introduction to Numerical Analysis	F 23	S 24	F 24	51	\$100	\$5,100
	Sosanya Jones	ELPS 606 Higher Education Administration & Governance		S 24		5	\$34	\$170
	Jermaine Young	POLS 003 Introduction to Comparative Politics		S 24		35	\$307	\$10,745
MU	Stephanie Chalk	CE 552 Mental Health Treatment of Trauma and Violence		S 24		16	\$120	\$1,920
	Larry Clay	MGT 451 Strategic Management	F 23			20	\$78	\$1,560
	John Jamison	MGT 304 Organization Management		S 24		134	\$170	\$23,731
	Judith Fruiterman	NU 333 Health Promotion and Illness Management in the Childbearing Years	F 23	S 24	F 24	102	\$133	\$13,566
UDC	Ronnie Brown	CCEN 101C: Introduction to Engineering		S 24		10	\$54	\$540
TOTAL						743	\$2,082	\$122,869

- **Pilot Cycle I Highlights**

When reviewing proposals for the first pilot year, evaluators eagerly anticipated reviewing projects that would optimize opportunities for large-scale textbook savings. Dr. James Quirk of American University, Dr. Elizabeth Chacko of George Washington University and Dr. John Jamison of the University of D.C., provided three excellent proposals that yielded a combined total of over \$78,000.00 in textbook savings for their students.

However, TAWG did not limit proposals to only large survey courses. It was also important to the group to advocate for using OER in smaller graduate level courses, including those provided by professional schools such as law, and those courses with highly esoteric or specialized topics. OER can be a great benefit in these subject areas, as well, when addressing expensive course material or subject matter unique to marginalized populations. In addition to providing zero textbook costs to a previously costly graduate level course, Dr. Kathryn Degnan of the Catholic University of America was able to secure permission to add open access statistical programs on campus computers for their PSY 705 Statistical Methods I.

STEM topics are one of the most popular OER subject areas. Despite this, it can be challenging to find OER material for specialized topics such as Women's Health. The program is tremendously pleased to have been able to provide support to Dr. Rogers-Fruiterman and Dr. Smith of Marymount University with the completion of their [NU 333 Health Promotion and Illness Management in the Childbearing Years: Maternal-Infant Nursing Review](#) full courseware website. Not only has the website provided the students with over \$13,000.00 in textbook savings, it has already become a valuable resource to fellow consortial nursing programs and the public-at-large who will now be able to use this valuable resource at no cost.

Another OER STEM courseware site contribution, was developed by Dr. Roberto De Leo of Howard University: [MATH 164 Introduction to Numerical Analysis](#). Dr. De Leo employed the NSF-funded project PreTeXt (pretextbook.org) to create an open source textbook with the functionality necessary to embed coding within pages that could operate without the need to install software. In his words, "... *the key outcome of my project is the realization of my own open-source textbook on Numerical Analysis, perfectly tailored to my needs and as user-friendly as possible for my students...This dramatically improved the quality of my teaching. On one side, the book fits perfectly with my lectures. On the other side, students' feedback helps improving the book every time I teach the class.*"

TAWG is pleased to share that *all* Pilot Cycle I cohorts have plans to continue using the adopted OER material in future semesters. Thus increasing the projected ratio of student savings to program expenditures to 2.70.

- **Pilot Cycle II Highlights and TAWG Marketing Campaign**

For the second pilot year, the Steering Committee assigned TAWG with an initiative to devise and implement a marketing plan to promote the program and encourage applications. The group was diligent in their efforts and the number of completed submissions doubled in comparison to Pilot Cycle I- clearly demonstrating the program's growth potential.

The second pilot year is currently underway with the first set of OER transformed courses to be implemented this Fall 2024. The estimated textbook savings for the 2024-2025 academic year is \$293,703.95. Thus, providing an increased ratio of student savings to program expenditure of 5.88. This estimate is more than twice that of the first pilot year and is largely informed by expanded department-wide participation. At least two universities will be implementing selected OER across all sections for a single course and two instructors from Howard Law will be substituting significantly costly commercially published law books with available OER case study publications. You can find more details regarding specific awardees and their subject areas in the May 15, 2024 WRLC Newsletter: [MORE Good Trouble: Open@WRLC Faculty Course Transformation Program Cycle II Awardee Announcement](#).

- **Pilot Cycle I and II: Programming Challenges**

With the close of Pilot Cycle I, TAWG has had an opportunity to review several lessons learned to improve future programming. Issues of uneven institutional support and participation, including TAWG's lack of committee status, continue to be a concern. As TAWG is classified as a working group, the level of participation is voluntary. TAWG's representatives are not required to attend meetings, remain in communication with program administrators, invest in professional development, or participate in programming. If TAWG representatives fail to do any of these tasks, fellow representatives are not likely to have the time or resources to address the gap and the labor defaults to WRLC program administrators.

This is a serious issue as the representatives are integral to providing recommendations for program budgets, infrastructure and support for faculty through OER reference assistance, professional development instruction and award disbursement. To ensure projects are completed on schedule, and per the program's requirements, TAWG representatives are also needed to manage progress meetings and review submitted projects for Creative Commons License and Digital Accessibility standards. These multiple responsibilities ensure that faculty from all participating institutions are treated equitably and provided the same program responsibilities. As a working group, TAWG also manages fund disbursements- while only a select number of WRLC committees oversee fiduciary responsibilities.

Mirroring the advice provided during the informational interviews conducted by TAWG, it is the WRLC's experience that all current administrative tasks are necessary to providing a quality OER Adopt-tier award program. At this stage of the pilot program, a remarkable amount of program supporting materials and documents have been drafted. However, these materials, including corresponding webinars, candidate portal information and the [Open@WRLC Faculty Course Transformation site](#) must all be updated at the launch of each year's program cycle. Additionally, administrative support will continue to be necessary to assist TAWG representatives with providing OER instruction, discovery assistance, professional development material, and program announcements; act as a primary contact for program communications; manage evaluation/selection process; provide Basecamp project site maintenance, and assist with award disbursements. While TAWG representatives will continue to act as the program's first point of contact for their awardees, administrative support will continue to be necessary for OER training and assistance with stewarding faculty throughout the program.

- **Year Three Proposed Budget and Recommendations**

The administrative support varies throughout the different stages of the programming, with more labor generally being required preceding the launch of Call for Proposals through evaluation and onboarding new cohorts. Overall, as expected and predicted by fellow postsecondary OER programs, this labor requires an average of 10-15 hours per week. Additionally, TAWG and WRLC program administrators have been unable to address concerns of how to handle candidate applications for those institutions that have not provided TAWG representation and awardees who become unresponsive and ignore project deadlines. Streamlining fund disbursement also continues to be a concern at some of the institutions. At least one university is still working to get Pilot Cycle I disbursements processed for their awardee.

WRLC recommends that if the budget is not expanded to provide the necessary publishing and instructional support for OER Adapt and Create tier award programming, that the current Adopt tier award program should continue for a third year with an increased number of award stipends and a dedicated program administrator. To add flexibility to the Adopt tier award budget, TAWG could consider lowering the pilot program stipend award amount. When TAWG was in the process of information gathering for the program, it was noted that the Adopt tier was typically provided with a \$2,000.00 award. It was decided that this amount would provide a healthy incentive to introduce the program. However, some programs provide lower Adopt tier award amounts that range from \$500.00- \$1,500.00. A lower award amount would allow for more participants and would still acknowledge labor and time.

Correspondingly, TAWG could consider providing various levels of Adopt tier awards that would address the amount of OER transformed material the faculty plans to update. Providing a lower award amount if only the syllabus is to be updated to address the adopted OER textbook

vs. the syllabus and a suite of courseware material such as lecture notes, exams, discussion question, slide decks, or even a course website.

Additional recommended budget items include: OEN membership, and a dedicated textbook review stipend budget. The \$200.00 Open Textbook Library review stipend program acts as an effective marketing and advocacy tool to help demystify OER and has directly informed increased interest and program proposals.

Proposed Open@WRLC FCT Year Three Budget

Administrative Support (part-time)	60,000.00
OEN Affiliate Membership	5,000.00
OTL Textbook Review Stipend Budget: 25 @ \$200.00 each	5,000.00
ASL Services	2,000.00
Adopt tier Award Budget: 20 @ \$2,000.00 each	40,000.00
Total	112,000.00

PART II: TAWG REPORT

- **OER Workshop Programming**

As a part of TAWG’s ongoing work, TAWG hosts 3-5 workshops a semester with an average of 15 attendees across WRLC institutions. These workshops are a method of outreach for the FCT program in addition to educating faculty on OER and related topics including CC Licensing and how OER aligns with DEI values. These workshops are also an opportunity to invite faculty that have been doing OER work in their classrooms to speak on their experiences.

- **SC Initiative Marketing Campaign**

TAWG was given the directive of creating a marketing plan for the program. As a part of this plan TAWG produced two documents: a digital flier advertising the program that could be customized to campus needs and an email template that could likewise be customized to promote the program. Additionally, members from seven WRLC institutions reported on their individual marketing efforts for the 2023-2024 year: AU, CU, GU, GW, HU, MU, and UDC. GMU has its own similar program through VIVA. GT does not currently have a representative, but the Chair and WRLC staff representative had a productive conversation with several non-library GT stakeholders.

This reporting was then used as a brainstorming effort to get inspiration on how to expand the reach to the faculty on our campuses. Among other marketing efforts, campus campaigns included inclusion in campus-wide newsletter, library website promotion, co-promotion through other units on campus and social media and blog posting. If funding continues, this information will be used in upcoming years to help establish effective marketing pathways for each school, including ways TAWG efforts can continue to supplement individual schools' marketing efforts.

- **Faculty Program Feedback**

Nine faculty submitted narrative feedback regarding the program from 2022-2023, with all 9 reflecting on positive aspects of the program for them and/or their students.

Impact on Faculty

Faculty appreciated the quality of the OER materials, noted that they had a greater understanding of the value of OER, and enjoyed being able to customize the texts to fit their course needs. Several mentioned other indirect benefits, either through future plans to incorporate OER into other courses they taught, or commitments from other faculty to incorporate OER into their courses.

Prof. Chalk at Marymount summarized her overall experience and appreciation of using OER to connect her class values with the materials offered: "I would not change anything about the implementation about OER and feel like it was suitable for the course. Since equity and marginalization are a large portion of what we talk about, I feel like providing equitable access material models and demonstrates the social justice values we discuss in class and in our program."

Impact on Students

Many professors reported positive student experiences associated with implementation of OER, including easier access to course materials, increased engagement in class, and similar or even better scores on assignments or in the class. Professor Chacko at George Washington University summarizes some of this feedback for her course, "*I asked the students in the course whether they liked having an open source textbook and all of them said that they appreciated having full access to a digital textbook and not having to buy an expensive required textbook that many of them were unlikely to refer to in the future. Their performance in the course was no different from when I taught the same course using a hard copy textbook in the past.*"

Faculty Inspirations for Seeking Out OER

An additional question was added to the application for the year 2023-2024 to ask what inspired their interest in OER. Every faculty member noted the cost of providing accessible materials as a

contributing factor in their interest. Several were already reevaluating their courses or programs and found that OER fit the content that they were looking for with the added benefit of being free and having a community surrounding the materials. Additionally, the ability to integrate diverse and multimedia content was highlighted as an added benefit by several faculty members including Eliseo Jacob from Howard University, “I was trained in graduate school using the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method, which emphasizes student development of communication skills in real life situations that go beyond the classroom. The BrazilPod OER aligns with my background in CLT teaching methods, and will provide students with interactive content (audio, video, and transcripts) of Brazilians interacting with each other in real-world scenarios in the target language.”

- **Student Survey Data**

In Spring 2023, 73 AU students were interviewed about their experiences and perceptions regarding OER and textbook affordability. The results demonstrate the strong ongoing need for OER. Just 34% of students indicated that they can afford their textbooks, with another 41% indicating that they take steps to be able to afford their textbooks (renting, part time job, pirating copies, etc.), and 25% said that they cannot afford their textbooks at all. The average reported cost was \$200.00. Finally, when asked if they feel “more understood and connected to professors” who use OER, 90% of respondents agreed, underscoring the important role OER can play in bridging the gap between faculty and student by demonstrating empathy toward the students’ financial situations. This data closely mirrors the compiled feedback we received from program recipients, and demonstrates a strong desire for OER at AU and across the consortium.

- **Working Group vs. Committee Challenges**

TAWG is currently a working group which does not have official responsibilities, although TAWG is currently operating under a shared responsibility model that generally works well with engaged members, though membership for individual schools does change over time, with several schools only minimally involved or not involved with our work.

Running the Open@WRLC FCT program and textbook review stipend includes TAWG staff time working with cohorts as they develop their project if there isn’t a member for an instructor’s university. This leaves supporting them to other members. If TAWG were to be a committee, membership and roles and responsibilities of TAWG members could be more formalized, instead of operating under a shared understanding model. This would also help increase accountability for responsibilities, particularly for management of the FCT Program, and decrease reliance on WRLC staff to cover duties that aren’t being handled by TAWG members.

- **Future TAWG Programming**

In this pilot, the focus has been on faculty members adopting existing OER rather than adapting or creating OER. Adapting or creating new OER materials would require greater support than we are currently able to provide as there would be a need to support hosting the new materials and editing support. Even with the focus on adopting materials, most faculty members have still created materials for use in their classrooms, from their own assignments to classroom presentations.

Members of TAWG are currently looking into potential grant opportunities that we could potentially use to support the FCT stipend program and/or the \$200.00 OER review stipend that was previously covered by the WRLC membership in the Open Education Network.

The workshops that TAWG hosts every semester as a way to outreach to faculty will continue to educate faculty on OER and other overlapping current events in related fields such as the intersection of AI and OER. We are also meeting with a member of StudentPIRGs to brainstorm how we can work with students specifically on OER use and awareness.

