2012 Faculty and Administrator Open Educational Resources Survey

Executive Summary

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The full report is available from: http://www.openaccesstextbooks.org/pdf/2012_Faculty-Admin_OER_Survey_Report.pdf.

The Florida Distance Learning Consortium was a network of all public (39) postsecondary institutions in Florida that served 1.3 million postsecondary students annually. On July 1, 2012 the Florida Distance Learning Consortium was merged with three other Florida organizations to form Florida Virtual Campus.

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To examine the open educational resources (OER) climate in Florida's postsecondary institutions, the Florida Distance Learning Consortium (FDLC) conducted an online survey of higher education faculty and staff between January 18 and April 4, 2012. The purpose of the survey was to assess their perceptions of textbook quality, awareness of OER, open textbooks, and open courseware, and respondents' experience with open access materials. The survey was a follow-up to the Florida Open Access Textbooks in Higher Education Survey, which was administered in fall term of 2009.

The FDLC developed the revised statewide survey with input from staff at the State University System Board of Governors and staff at the Division of Florida Colleges. The Consortium commissioned a measurement and statistics professional to assist with developing and analyzing the survey. All 39 state institutions were invited to participate. From participating institutions, faculty and staff were solicited by campus officials. Over 2,500 respondents (n = 2,593) from eight of Florida's 11 state universities and 22 of its 28 community colleges and state colleges agreed to participate in the anonymous online survey. Of the respondents, 916 (38%) reported employment by universities and 1,483 (62%) by colleges.

Parallel to the faculty and staff survey, a student survey was conducted to assess Florida postsecondary students' experiences and perceptions of textbooks, digital resources, and OER during the same period as the faculty and staff survey. It was a revised version of the 2010 Florida Student Textbook Survey (FDLC, 2011). On questions selected for their comparative value, responses of students were examined for similarities and differences to the faculty and staff responses.

Key findings from this study indicated that faculty perceived themselves as being likely to use and, to a much smaller degree, to author OER. However, few had actually authored any type of OER. A deficiency of incentives for authoring could be a barrier to authorship. Time, support, professional editing, and the availability of co-authors were identified as important considerations in deciding to author. In addition, very few of the respondents indicated that creating any types of OER were considered as criteria for promotion and tenure. Open textbook and open courseware use patterns suggest that providing OER in small units (e.g., modules, chapters) may best fit the needs of faculty. The following section provides a summary of the key findings. A more in depth report of the findings is provided in the Discussion section of this report.

Summary of Key Findings

❖ **Key Finding 1: Faculty and staff are becoming familiar with open textbooks, though relatively few have used them.** Almost three-quarters of respondents had heard of open textbooks, but only 6% reported having used part or all of an open textbook.

❖ **Key Finding 2: The most important factors in evaluating textbooks are how well they address course objectives, accuracy, currency, and consistency.** For the choice, "pertinence of the content to the objectives of a course," the most common rank was 1 (i.e., the highest rank) and the median rank was also 1.

❖ **Key Finding 3: In deciding to author open textbooks, faculty and staff value time, support, professional editing, and co-authors most highly.** Potential means for addressing these factors include release time for authoring and institution funding for editorial services for the development of open textbooks and resources.

❖ **Key Finding 4: Faculty are familiar with the term open courseware (80%) but less than one-quarter have used open courseware in support of their teaching.** Of those who had used open courseware (21%), over half reported using it for their own courses, 63% reported adapting it for use in their own courses, and 50% reported using it to prepare for teaching a class.

❖ **Key Finding 5: Although approximately one-third perceived OER, open courseware, and open textbooks to be similar or greater in academic value to commercial resources, approximately half did not know their commercial value or the opportunities they present.** Open textbooks were rated as similar or more valuable by 36%, open courseware was rated similarly by 36%, and open educational resources by 45%, when compared to commercial resources. It is important to note that nearly half (48%, 52%, 44% respectively) expressed that they did not know their comparative value.

❖ **Key Finding 6: Many faculty perceived themselves as being likely to use OER in the future.** Almost three-quarters (73%) of respondents answered that they were either very likely or somewhat likely to use a portion of an open textbook, and half (51%) said they were very or somewhat likely use all of an open textbook.

❖ **Key Finding 7: Use patterns suggest that breaking OER into small units may increase their usefulness.** A much larger percentage of respondents reported using portions rather than entire open textbooks (22% vs. 8%, respectively) and open courseware (28% vs. 7% respectively).

❖ **Key Finding 8: Although more than a third of the respondents viewed themselves as likely to author OER in the future, relatively few reported having done so.** Respondents indicated that they were very likely or somewhat likely to author a portion of an open textbook (38%), a portion of an open course (35%), or other OER (42%) in the future. Relatively few, however, reported developing or having developed an open textbook (3%), open courseware (4%), or other OER (11%) at present.

❖ **Key Finding 9: Interactive practice questions were ranked highest among digital study aids for supporting student learning, indicating their importance as supplements to textbooks.** Other highly ranked digital study aids included video, interactive try-it-now activities, and PowerPoint slide shows.

❖ **Key Finding 10: Some libraries offer textbooks for students to check out, but many students and some faculty are unaware that they do.** Almost half (48%) of respondents indicated that their institutional libraries provide a copy of their textbook for check out. However, 23% did not know and 26% stated that their library did not provide checkout access to textbooks.

❖ **Key Finding 11: Few institutions or departments consider authoring OER in promotion and tenure decisions.** Very few of respondents indicated creating open textbooks (7%), open courseware (6%), and OER (8%) would be considered as a criterion for promotion and tenure. This could potentially leave a deficiency of incentives for authoring. Incentives for authors are important because faculty have very busy schedules and have to concentrate on their careers to succeed.

❖ **Key Finding 12: Private funding and fees for students are viewed as the most viable sources for funding open textbooks.** A small open materials fee in the student payment schedule when an open textbook is used in the course might be a sustainable approach to generating revenue to support the development and maintenance of open textbooks.