How to Establish an SGA Open Education Award on Your Campus

A <u>detailed</u> supplemental handout to a poster presented at the 2018 Open Education Conference
Condensed Handout: https://tiny.utk.edu/2tEfy | Poster: https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_libfac/6/

1. ENVISION: Establish the Award

Build student awareness.
Takeaway: Identify (or create) regional opportunities for OER outreach directed to Student Government Associations (SGAs) and build from there.

What we did at UT:
- Participated in existing educational efforts in our region.
  - SEC Academic Collaboration Workshop, Texas A&M University, 2015
    - Workshop theme: "Developing Partnerships to Advance Open Access Initiatives at SEC Universities".
    - UT SGA representative and UT librarian attendance; included student-specific sessions and shared working meetings.
  - SEC Student Government Exchange, University of Florida, 2016
    - Annual summer workshop included presentation by UF librarians on open textbooks and other forms of OER.
- Continued conversations upon return to campus.
  - Began with SGA meeting attendance; focused on background education and question-and-answer discussions.

Set direction through examples.
Takeaway: Students may not know how to direct their energy to advocate for OER. Providing examples of legislation, grant opportunities, etc. may be welcomed.

What we did at UT:
- Directed students to SGA award legislation in TAMU's open repository.
  - Students created their own legislation with a call for such an award at UT, and the Libraries offered to help organize the awards. The awards have not been officially established through legislation. UT SGA will continue exploring this option.

Tip: If legislation is passed, encourage SGA to share with appropriate administrators.

Timing: From awareness to legislation may take 1-3 years.

2. ENCOURAGE: Promote & Coordinate

Educate faculty and students simultaneously.
Takeaway: More than just a form of recognition, promoting the award leads to further conversations about OERs.

What we did at UT:
- Hosted incentivized faculty workshop with the Open Textbook Network the same week as hosting the first SGA Open Education Awards.
  - This dialogue helped lead to three new adoptions of open textbooks.
- Wrote news stories with textbook adoption updates 2-3 times each semester.
- Invited to presentations to Directors of Undergraduate Programs and Department Heads in College of Arts and Sciences.
  - Events included statements from Student Public Research Interest Groups (PIRGs), UT students, SGA, and faculty adopters.

Coordinate and promote throughout the year.
Takeaway: Year-long efforts increase word of mouth, student feelings of award ownership, and dissemination back to (and from) departments.

What we did at UT:
- Posted signs marking growing adoptions (thermometers of savings) in highly visible library spaces.
  - Signs were student "owned"; SGA also used them as a way to solicit student feedback on OERs.
- Met with SGA in fall to gauge interest, drawing on summer SEC experiences.
  - Provided time and space for students to settle into semester before continuing the conversation. Met frequently after initial discussion.
- Hosted presentations and workshops throughout the year, including to the interdisciplinary Dean of Libraries' Student Advisory Committee (DSAC).
  - Invited DSAC participation and shared updates in person and online.
  - Note: two graduate students adopted open textbooks in their courses and/or sections from these conversations.

Generate campus interest through action-oriented announcements.
Takeaway: Focus communications on soliciting nominations and/or reporting adoptions--not just the new award. Encourage faculty to report their OER adoptions in every news story or announcement intended for them.

What we did at UT:
- Libraries began creating award nomination form as legislation was being drafted.

- Announcements of awards accompanied calls for action: students to nominate instructors, faculty to report adoptions.

Tips: Ongoing outreach leads to greater awareness of who has adopted or is considering OER. Use this knowledge to help SGA to target nomination promotions.

Assistance: Those helping students may need to create or assist in developing a nomination form. Use this as a chance to also develop an OER adoption reporting form. For examples, see UT's Nomination form (adapted from TAMU) and Adoption form (adapted from Colorado State).

---

3. ACKNOWLEDGE: Recognize Recipients

Define roles and responsibilities with SGA/partners early in process.
Takeaway: Because the award is student-led, SGA has a major role in soliciting nominations.

What we did at UT:
- SGA and Libraries work together to find and acknowledge instructors with OER adoptions and to define and distribute award criteria.
  - Libraries provide SGA with lists of known courses with OER adoptions.
  - SGA asks for nominations from students and works with Libraries and Division of Student Life offices on plans to solicit nominations.
- SGA works with the Dean of Students Office to distribute emails seeking nominations to students in courses with OER adoptions. SGA also asks instructors if they can visit these classes to encourage nominations.
  - Note: In first year, did not include email solicitations; SGA and librarians sought nominations by distributing flyers outside of large-enrollment classes with open textbook adoptions.

Assemble a review committee from interested students.
Takeaway: Asking one student organization (SGA) to be part of all aspects of the award is a burden on an already busy group. Find additional students to support efforts.

What we did at UT:
- Introduced awards with fall semester meetings with Dean of Libraries' Student Advisory Committee (DSAC), including larger discussion of OER.
  - Invited DSAC volunteers to Application Review Working Group; one member of SGA is also part of this team.
  - Note: one student served on group for two consecutive years, providing continuity to the process and support for newer members.

Provide consistency in hosting annual award reception.
Takeaway: Event planning should be handled outside of student groups to provide continuity and to alleviate pressure on students during busy end-of-year exams.

What we did at UT:
- Libraries led recognition-based elements, including:
  - Paying for small reception and commemorative plaques for winners.
  - Inviting the following to awards ceremony: all involved student groups, students who nominated instructors, all nominated instructors and their Department Heads, Dean of Students, and the Office of the Provost.
- Libraries facilitated follow-up announcements and photos were shared in campus news and on social media.

Tip: Award does not have to be monetary, but a plaque or trophy is a tangible recognition for winners and is good to showcase in photos and social media.

Timing: Schedule the event early to be sure busy groups (SGA, Deans, Provost or representative) will attend. The timing of the event (near final exams) means attendance has been low at UT receptions, but participants seem to enjoy the camaraderie of an intimate gathering. Sharing photos and stories is particularly important due to the timing and provides a way to involve even those who cannot attend.

---

4. ASSESS: Reflect & Improve

Recognize that education is ongoing.
Takeaway: The steps represented throughout the four areas above did not happen all in one year. The efforts sometimes build upon one another but can also change each year.

What we observed at UT:
- There will be confusion about other textbook affordability efforts; it is perpetual education for faculty. "Open" is not easily grasped outside of other affordability programs.
- While OERs grow more familiar to students, the award is perpetually new to them, as is learning reasons why a faculty member might not be interested.

Gather data to support vision and share with campus community.
Takeaway: Cultivate dialogue with partners and examine how you can tailor your message for varied audiences (students, faculty, administrators), considering which messages will resonate (e.g., affordability, flexibility in teaching, equity social justice, funding opportunities, etc.).

What we did at UT:
- Sought reports from faculty about their OER adoptions throughout the year.
- Formed a working group to identify partners and establish dialogue with the campus community.
  - Possible working group partners: Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, distance education support, instructional designers, bookstore, marketing and communications, lecturers, faculty, student groups.
- Provided regular updates to liaison librarians and the library to help build awareness, knowledge, and support.

Tips: Don't forget to include graduate students in outreach. They are often teaching and may be able to bring up options in their departments as they seek new textbooks. They can be a strong voice for change.

Assistance: Investigate other affordability efforts on campus and talked to those organizations about how you are similar and how you are different. Know the textbook ordering deadlines each year. Share data about OER adoptions.

Rachel Caldwell (rachelcaldwell@utk.edu),
Scholarly Communication Librarian
Anna Sandelli (asandell@utk.edu)
Interim Head, Teaching & Learning Programs
Heather Doncaster (doncas00@vols.utk.edu),
UT Libraries Graduate Assistant and School of Information Sciences Student

Icon credits: All from the Noun Project, licensed under CC-BY. Calendar--Markus, Clock--Ali Wijaya, Pencil--teleymon, Thought bubble--Jason Santos.