

## Executive Summary – OER & University of Hawaii Assessment Survey

September 2015

Open educational resources (OER) are materials used to support education that can be reused, modified, and made available for free to all. They can include entire courses, textbooks, tests, modules to name a few. The OER movement began as early as 2001 in a global effort to provide access to knowledge and make it available to everyone when numerous universities and organizations across the world began developing and offering OER.

The benefits of OER can include lowering the costs of course materials for students, positively affecting budgets for school systems, broadening alternatives to textbooks, and fostering pedagogical innovation.

Because the use of OER is still in the early stages, the University of Hawaii (UH) Open Educational Resources Team felt it was important to learn how and why instructional faculty and staff across the UH System were or wanted to interact with OER. This document reports on the findings of a self-completion questionnaire distributed to UH instructional faculty and staff during the spring of 2015.

There was an extremely low response rate from across the system. This might be an indication that a large number of instructional faculty and staff are unaware of OER. Responses were generated at all campuses, with the highest response rate coming from the area of Language Arts, followed closely by Humanities and Social Sciences. A large majority of responding instructors teach at the undergraduate level and more than half have ten or more years of instructional experience.

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of familiarity with OER: 50% indicated that they were somewhat familiar, while 36% were not at all familiar with OER. Though 50% of respondents reported being somewhat familiar with OER, only 35% had actually used OER in their courses and 65% had not.

When searching for OER materials, it appears that many people are not aware of resources such as MERLOT, OpenStax, Open Course Library, etc. Most respondents indicated that they rely on colleagues or general Google searches to find materials. This tendency plus feedback indicating a level of difficulty in finding good-quality OER indicate a need to disseminate good resource guides and guidelines for the selection of high-quality OER. With regards to the quality of the OER, 61% responded that they thought OER were similar in quality to resources that are purchased, while 34% thought that OER are of lower quality.

The survey responses indicate that 59% of respondents were somewhat to very likely to **use** OER but dropped to 43% for those considering **creating** OER. Factors influencing respondents' decision to use OER are the time it takes to find, review, and select OER; the academic quality of the OER materials; and the desire to reduce costs to students. With regards to the **creation** of the materials, respondents felt it was very important to have knowledge about OER, to have the time to find materials, to be able to select academic materials of quality, to have the support from administration, as well as the desire to reduce costs to students. When respondents were asked about why they might not be interested in OER, the two highest rated reasons were the time required to use or create and the uncertainty about the quality of OER.