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Supporting faculty through an open education and affordability gratitude campaign

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Supporting faculty through an open education and affordability gratitude campaign

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Using a gratitude campaign to encourage faculty support of open education and affordability

Abstract

Purpose

The purpose of this case study is to demonstrate how an academic library can use a library-led, public, positive, and broad faculty gratitude campaign to help a campus embrace a culture of open education.

Design/methodology/approach

Using a literature review of faculty outreach efforts in the area of open education, as well as an examination of the psychology of persuasion, this library developed a gratitude campaign that consisted of a faculty video, letters from the Provost, signed cards from students, door hangers, and the delivery of swag bags to faculty offices.

Findings

While it is challenging to assess how much an initiative may have changed campus culture, initial responses to the gratitude campaign have been overwhelmingly positive. In addition, it cost little or nothing to develop the campaign and materials can be reused in future events and initiatives.

Practical implications

Changing campus culture, maintaining momentum in a program with limited funding, and reaching reluctant faculty are all challenges for open education initiatives. Initiating a gratitude

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campaign can begin to address all of these by being public, positive, and inclusive. This case

study describes how a campus could adopt any or all of the gratitude campaign strategies, and it

includes openly licensed examples, templates, and models for readers to use.

Originality/value

Open education and affordability efforts that use presentations, grant programs, and awards are

common on academic campuses. However, when funding is tight or these efforts fail to reach

new audiences, a gratitude campaign can make inroads where these traditional efforts are

limited.

Keywords

open education, affordability, outreach, faculty, gratitude, video, social proof, persuasion,

library, collaboration

Paper Type - Case study

Introduction

> *"Give thanks for a little and you will find a lot." - Hausa Proverb*

Many academic librarians are interested in promoting open education and affordability on

their campuses. Evidence of the negative impact of textbook costs on student academic outcomes

is mounting, often resulting in "student survivalism," which Thompson *et al.* describe as "opting

out of some classes and majors and often delaying or declining to purchase assigned readings,

setting [students] back by weeks of study or simply leaving them hopelessly behind their

wealthier peers" (2017). Since 2000, cost barriers alone have prevented 2.4 million low- and

middle-income students in the United States from completing college (U.S. Advisory Committee

on Student Financial Assistance, 2006). While textbook and other coursework costs only

comprise one part of the financial hurdle for post-secondary students, these costs are often

surprising to students, may not be covered by financial aid, and have a disproportionate impact

on student success. Between 1977 and 2015, consumer prices for textbooks have increased over

1,000% (Popken, 2015). In 2018, the high cost of textbooks caused 64% of students to decide not

to purchase one or more of their required textbooks, 43% to take fewer courses, 23% to drop a

course, and 17% to fail a course (Florida Virtual Campus, 2019). Even more troubling, evidence

shows that the impact of textbook costs is greater for Pell-eligible and part-time students

(Colvard *et al.*, 2018).

The disproportionate impact of course material costs on student success has led many

higher education institutions to commit to reducing textbook costs. However, building an

affordability initiative can be challenging, especially when faculty are hesitant or skeptical about

switching to an open, free, or low-cost textbook alternative. Even when some faculty are

enthusiastic and motivated to contribute significant time and energy to moving toward open

education, a program's momentum can be slowed by resistance to the initiative by other faculty.

One solution to this problem is to publicly encourage and reward "early adopter" faculty

for their contributions to affordability. This article will provide a literature review of

encouragement strategies used at various libraries, and it will also present several methods

employed by the author's library, including featuring faculty in videos, distributing "thank you"

door hangers, thanking faculty in social media posts, and giving affordability advocates swag

bags. Many libraries already have developed larger-scale methods of motivating or compensating

faculty, such as through grants and awards, so emphasis in the present article will be on

opportunities to show gratitude when additional funding is not available. The strategies described

will also attempt to be as inclusive as possible; for example, including faculty who use library

resources or who have completely eliminated the use of a textbook and are often overlooked by

grant programs. Showing gratitude to these faculty is also a chance to celebrate the library

services that help all of our faculty and students on a regular basis.

Faculty Outreach and Open Education

Jensen and West (2015) define open education as "a philosophy, a pedagogical shift, and

a movement that works to improve educational experiences through adopting learning materials

that aren't locked down by restrictive copyright laws." The materials that drive open education

are called open educational resources (OERs), which are openly-licensed materials used for

teaching that allow for what David Wiley has called the "5R activities" (Wiley n.d). The five

permissions that Wiley describes are the ability to retain, revise, remix, reuse, and redistribute

the work (Wiley n.d.). These permissions allow faculty and students to engage in many activities

that would normally be restricted by copyright, opening the door for faculty to customize their

courses in ways that improve student learning.

At its core, the open education movement is not just about OERs, but about freeing and

improving the educational experience (Paskevicius 2017). This shift involves, as Jensen and

West assert, pedagogical changes beyond just the type of materials that are assigned in a course;

open education encourages improving student learning by considering the course materials and

the materials that students create in the process of learning. Nascimbeni and Burgos describe an

open educator as exhibiting the following actions: transparently sharing teaching ideas and

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resources with others, using OERs in instruction, implementing open pedagogy practices that

engage students, and adopting open assessment activities (2016). To make the transformation in

pedagogy required by open education, a shift in the culture on our campuses and in higher

education is necessary.

A culture shift to the use of OERs is difficult in part because faculty face barriers to

adoption that are complicated and challenging to overcome. First, while it is becoming more

common for faculty to have heard of OERs, a lack of faculty awareness or understanding can

prevent a culture shift (Babson Report 2019). When faculty learn about open education, even if

they become interested, they may need training in order to find and use OERs, especially when

they are interested in remixing projects that require technological skill (Amiel 2013). If they

perceive that training and support is not available, they may choose not to complete or attempt an

OER project (Amiel 2013). Even if faculty are interested and training is available, one

particularly substantial barrier is a lack of time (Lieberman 2018). Faculty must use their time

wisely, especially those who are on the tenure track and, unfortunately, the creation of open

materials is not often considered in tenure decisions. These and other challenges give faculty

legitimate pause when it comes to adopting the practices of an open educator (Nascimbeni and

Burgos 2016).

Libraries have frequently been central to open education efforts. Librarians are often

OER advocates, OER finders, and OER publishers, leading the way on their campuses.

Librarians fill this role successfully because they have the skills to find high-quality course

materials; knowledge of copyright and, to some extent, publishing; training skills and resources;

and a central campus platform to advocate for the sweeping change necessary to move to open

(Cassidy *et al.*, 2015; Jensen and West, 2015). In addition, and perhaps most importantly, open

education resonates with many of the values that librarians have adopted as professionals, such as access to information, lifelong learning, and academic freedom.

Librarians reach out to faculty to encourage the adoption and creation of open textbooks in a number of ways. One central role that librarians play is in helping faculty find appropriate open course materials. For example, at Utah State University, librarians offer a service of reviewing faculty syllabi and helping them find OERs and library-licensed resources to meet their course objectives (Davis *et al.*, 2016). Librarians also can play a role in making OERs more discoverable and curating the materials developed at their own institution (Okamoto, 2013). This often means sharing OERs via an institutional repository or other platform and providing robust metadata in the process (Mitchell and Chu, 2014). Martin emphasizes that academic librarians have a responsibility to manage and understand collections of free and openly licensed content in order to successfully meet the needs of patrons (2010).

Librarians can also play an important outreach role by providing professional development and training programs for faculty. Events can be centered around Open Access Week or Open Education Week, or consist of regular workshops (Salem, 2017). Dean (2018) describes her programming efforts at Clemson University, which include an informational pizza party for students, workshops for faculty, visits to departmental meetings, and drop-in information sessions about her library's grant program. Rigling and Cross' (2018) textbook affordability program at North Carolina State University offers Open Access Week pop-up interviews with students, whiteboards with questions for students, and a workshop series about open access and open education. These outreach offerings both train faculty and advocate for open education, often to a captive audience.

Offering faculty incentive programs through textbook adoption or creation grants has

become a popular strategy for encouraging OER adoption and creation, and these programs have

often met with success. Effective programs can be found at the University of Massachusetts at

Amherst (Smith 2018), the State University of New York (SUNY) system (Pitcher, 2014), the

Emory Open Education Initiative (Emory Scholarly Communication Office, n.d.), the University

of California at Los Angeles' Affordable Textbook Initiative (Celik and Peck, 2016), the

University of Minnesota's Partnership for Affordable Content (Jensen, 2018), Oregon State

University Libraries and Press open textbook program (Sutton and Chadwell, 2014), and Ohio

University's Alt-Textbook Initiative (Salem, 2017). These programs vary in their scale and

objectives (i.e., textbook adoption vs. creation), but all have found success in financially

supporting faculty to make the transition to openly licensed course material.

One of the most valuable outcomes of faculty outreach programs is the development of

faculty champions who can advocate for open education to their peers (Salem, 2017). Helping

faculty find materials, training them about open education, and providing grants or awards to aid

in their adoption of open material all lead faculty to become part of a larger initiative and, also,

potentially, faculty champions who will spread the word to their colleagues.

These faculty outreach strategies can be especially effective in engaging early adopters.

However, for institutions that are ready to move beyond engaging early adopters and do not have

the resources to offer or increase these options, strategically promoting faculty work already

being done can capitalize on the existing momentum on those campuses. While there are plenty

of case studies describing faculty outreach efforts that require funding or significant investments

in time, there are few to date that outline the smaller projects that campuses can undertake for

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little or no cost. In addition, few studies draw a connection between their faculty outreach efforts

and psychological concepts that strengthen their approach.

The Psychology of Public Gratitude

Many faculty choose not to use an open textbook for reasons that are outside of their (and

their campus') control. For example, for many there is still no open alternative that meets their

curricular needs, and for others the commercial textbook they use is uniquely suited to their

course and not very expensive. In addition, the work required to adopt or create open educational

resources may not be recognized in the promotion and tenure process, compromising the return

on investment. Many of these faculty have chosen to take action to aid students in reducing

textbook costs where they can. However, there are faculty who are hesitant to switch to an open

textbook for other reasons. For example, they might have doubts about the importance of saving

money for students, they may perceive open education as a passing fad, or they may not be

aware of the support available to them for switching textbooks. For open education advocates

who understand the importance of OERs for improving learning experiences and helping

students, the focus of their initiatives is on changing these faculty attitudes.

Changing someone's attitude can be very difficult. Even though attempts at doing so are

sometimes successful, psychological research shows that it is often more effective to change

someone's actions, rather than attempting to change their attitude (Crimmins, 2016). According

to self-perception theory, people do not really have a true understanding of themselves, but,

rather, infer who they are based on how they behave (Bem, 1972). Therefore, counter-intuitively,

changing someone's behavior often results in that person changing their attitude in order to be

consistent (Harmon-Jones, 2002). Faculty members' attitudes are difficult to change but helping

them assign their actions to attitudes that are consistent with better learning outcomes may be more fruitful.

One tactic that takes advantage of self-perception theory is called the "foot-in-the-door technique" (Crimmins, 2016). This technique rests on the idea that "persuading people to take a small action is more feasible and, once they take the small action, their attitude begins to change, making the major persuasion possible" (Crimmins, 2016). For example, although many libraries would like to encourage faculty to consider using openly-licensed materials, it may be easier to encourage a smaller action, such as using a library-licensed ebook, trying electronic course reserves, or piloting a single, small OER in their course. Once an instructor tries changing their course content and observes the benefits of doing so—including a sense of inclusion in the campus affordability initiative—they may be more open to considering an action that was once more daunting, such as switching to an open textbook.

Another strategy for changing faculty behavior is to show gratitude to early adopters in settings where their colleagues will see it. This strategy takes advantage of a number of psychological effects, one of which is called "social proof" —evidence that an idea has value because trusted members of one's in-group have vouched for it (Cialdini, 1993). This psychological phenomenon builds on the idea that people like to identify with social peers who feel the way they themselves want to feel (Crimmins, 2016). When faculty see colleagues publicly praised and appreciated for their work of switching to more affordable course materials, they may want to feel appreciated as well. Humans strive to think of themselves positively (a phenomenon called the self-image enhancement effect), and so faculty may be interested in joining an initiative that associates them with the positive self-image that they strive to embody (Crimmins, 2016). An inclusive gratitude program also can lead to a larger number of faculty

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who consider themselves a part of the affordability initiative overall, which in turn means more opportunities for social proof.

Finally, public gratitude emphasizes certain and positive feelings, which humans prefer over feelings of uncertainty or unpredictability (Crimmins, 2016). Unfortunately, in some contexts this means that people are hesitant to take actions that have long-term benefits but are unpleasant in the short term. People are less likely to act in the face of a "delayed, uncertain, and rational reward," but may be persuaded by an "immediate, certain, and emotional reward" (Crimmins, 2016). Faculty who see their peers publicly thanked can see a clear path to positive emotional responses from their institution. And faculty who have been told that they already are contributing to an affordability initiative may begin to feel positively toward it. They may perceive themselves as part of a solution they support ideologically, even if they did not feel that way before. This can propel the momentum of an initiative forward so that it begins to feel like a campus-wide effort, rather than merely the library's pet project.

Background

Cleveland State University (CSU), located in downtown Cleveland, serves a diverse student population of approximately 17,700 students. Offering one of the most affordable tuition rates for a four-year public university in Ohio, CSU serves many first-generation and Pell-eligible students. Approximately 27 percent of the CSU student population comes from a minority group; of those, two-thirds are African American. More than 1,400 CSU students are international students, and about one-third are graduate students.

CSU's Michael Schwartz Library has been active in promoting textbook affordability efforts since 2014, when it became one of the seven founding members of the Open Textbook

Network, which as of this writing has over 1,000 campus members around the world. Since

spring, 2016, the Michael Schwartz Library has been offering small Textbook Affordability

Grants to help faculty adopt or adapt open educational resources or library-licensed content in

courses to save students money. By fall of 2019 28 grants were awarded, with an estimated

impact for 4,387 students. If the open textbooks adopted at CSU replaced books that cost, on

average, $100 each, then CSU students saved a cumulative total of $438,700 from the first-year

implementations of these grants alone. In addition to the Textbook Affordability Grant program,

the library also partners with other departments on campus to bring in external speakers, offers

an annual Textbook Hero Award, and conducts several open textbook workshops per academic

year.

All of these initiatives — grants, awards, external speakers, and regular workshops — are

common on other campuses, and have been successful in making open education a spotlight

issue at CSU. However, with no additional funding and a desire to maintain momentum after

several successful events, CSU decided to add some new outreach tactics to its efforts.

Methods

The Michael Schwartz Library has had success with programming and grant initiatives

and estimates that the grant program alone has saved students more than $400,000 since its

initiation in 2016. However, grant applications have slowed, and in 2019 the OER Committee

recognized that the campus needed a culture shift. This article uses Dean's definition of cultural

change: "embedded shifts in routines, behaviors, values, and expectations at both individual and

institutional levels" (2018). In 2019, CSU turned its efforts toward nurturing a campus culture of

support, gratitude, and student learning in which open education could naturally flourish. In such

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a culture, faculty could feel that the difficult work of modifying and improving their teaching

was supported, and the library could have an important role in providing that support. Based on

the psychology insights described above, there were three criteria for CSU's new faculty

outreach strategy:

1. **It should be public**. The audience for outreach efforts was faculty peers and assessors

   who may still perceive open education as a passing fad or "just another initiative."

2. **It should be positive**. It became clear early on that messages that blamed faculty or

   nagged them to replace their textbooks were not successful and could actually undermine

   the library's efforts. The focus of this campaign was engendering a sense of gratitude.

3. **It should be inclusive.** Although the use and creation of OERs is still heavily promoted,

   this campaign included any faculty who had made attempts to consider affordability

   when choosing course materials. This approach cast a wide net and helped those faculty

   identify as part of the campus affordability campaign.

CSU's initiative, which was called a "gratitude campaign," centered on highlighting and

publicly praising the faculty who have been OER champions in the initial stages of the program.

The library was the leader in these efforts, but by no means the only campus department

involved. The CSU OER Committee, Center for eLearning, Student Government Association,

Center for Instructional Technology and Distance Learning, and Center for Faculty Excellence

all provided feedback and ideas.

While some strategies targeted grant and award winners exclusively, many of them

included a wide variety of faculty, all of whom had demonstrated an interest in reducing

textbook costs for students. Faculty on the longer list were called "affordability advocates." This

affordability advocate list was generated through conversations with faculty and students, and by

word-of-mouth from other library staff. Any faculty member who had participated in an open

education event on campus was also added to the list. Faculty from a wide variety of

departments, using a variety of methods to reduce textbook costs, were considered affordability

advocates. Listed faculty included those who used library-licensed content, openly-licensed

content, free material, and, in some cases, no required textbook at all. At CSU, the goal is to

prioritize the use of open materials, not just saving students money. However, faculty who are

already thinking about textbook costs might become strong allies in the move toward open

education. Maintaining an affordability advocates list helps reach a greater number of faculty.

One element of the gratitude campaign was giving key faculty champions a voice in an

OER advocacy video that was created in collaboration with the CSU Center for Technology and

Distance Learning (CITDL). The designers of the video decided early on that, instead of

highlighting student voices, the video would be an opportunity to feature faculty champions and

show gratitude for their willingness to embrace CSU's initiative. The video features interviews

of several faculty who received Textbook Affordability Grants, as well as an administrator who

supported faculty grant-winners, and a faculty member who did not win a grant but was a vocal

proponent of textbook affordability. Video creation took hours, even though the resulting video

was only seven minutes. However, the result was an extremely valuable tool, both for

highlighting the library's affordability efforts, and for publicly thanking faculty colleagues who

had taken action to reduce textbook costs. Drawing on the psychology of persuasion, the video

relied on social proof, and it provided certain and positive messaging from faculty colleagues. (A

link to the video is here: https://youtu.be/fiIJsHr-AFk).

The library also received feedback that grant winners were struggling to find ways of

gaining credit during the promotion and tenure process for their textbook affordability efforts. To

address this need, the library modified an openly-licensed thank-you letter developed by the

University of Alaska Southeast, and asked CSU's Provost if he would sign letters for all grant

winners. He agreed to do so, providing grant winners with important evidence of the value of

OERs to the university and to student learning. While this letter would not be publicly displayed,

members of promotion and tenure committees would see the Provost's support for their

colleagues' efforts when they viewed this letter in the dossiers under review, providing some

valuable social proof. The letter, openly licensed, may be found in Appendix 1.

The CSU librarians also wanted to create flyers, monitor displays, and other marketing

material showing the faces of grant winners and encouraging others to apply for the grant.

However, when faculty grant winners were asked to provide a photo for marketing purposes,

many were not able to provide a high-resolution, professional photo. The OER Committee

decided to hold several photoshoots, with photos taken by an amateur photographer on the OER

Committee and instructional designer in the Center for eLearning. All of the winners were

ultimately given full permission to use the professional photographs in other contexts, which

allowed the library to extend thanks to them without spending any additional funds. It also

employed the foot-in-the-door technique by making a small ask (for faculty to have their

photograph taken), and then moving to a larger one (for faculty to have their photograph featured

in library marketing).

The CSU OER Committee is fortunate to have one SGA representative each academic

year, usually selected by the SGA president. In 2019, the OER Committee was able to organize a

meeting between the SGA representative, the author of the present article, and Nicole

Finkbeiner, who came to CSU for a day to meet with various groups and committees about open

textbook adoption. Finkbeiner's advice was to make sure that CSU's student open textbook

efforts remained positive; she had learned through experience that negative campaigns (like the #textbookbroke campaign) could alienate some faculty and make them defensive. Based on her advice, and with considerable help from the library's marketing staff, the SGA representative and the author of the present article created large thank-you cards, signed by students, for all faculty affordability advocates. Because most students are still unclear about what an open textbook is and may even be unaware that their professor is using one, it seemed easiest to have SGA members themselves sign the cards on behalf of the student body. SGA had, fortunately, heard from an OER Committee representative several times about open textbooks, and they were eager to help.

The cards were incorporated into a virtual poster that was displayed in May, 2020 at the Provost's Teaching Summit, an annual event that celebrates teaching excellence and features an award ceremony. Many faculty who prioritize pedagogical mastery attend this event, making it a great opportunity to publicly praise affordability advocates. This approach was positive and affirming, providing a clear path to the positive faculty-student relationship that many faculty desire. Images of the cards can be found in Appendix 2.

Because the gratitude campaign relied on social proof, the library wanted to thank CSU's affordability advocates publicly and, importantly, in a manner that would attract the attention of their colleagues. The library's marketing staff member decided to create door hangers for all of our affordability advocates' office doors. These door hangers serve as a public reminder to other faculty of the importance CSU assigns to considerations of textbook cost, and they may refresh a faculty member's memory at a critical juncture, such as when they are choosing a new course textbook. Because the library had not directly worked with many of the faculty on their affordability efforts, the door hanger project also served to reframe the actions of those faculty as

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part of our initiative. Some of the faculty may not have identified themselves as part of the

affordability initiative on campus, but once their actions were reframed, their attitude toward the

program was likely to follow. The design of the door hanger can be found in Appendix 3.

For Textbook Affordability grant recipients who had successfully completed their

projects, a visit to their office door was used as an opportunity to celebrate their contribution on

social media. Library staff planned to bring those faculty a "goody bag" of library swag,

complete with information about upcoming campus open education events. Faculty were

contacted in advance to ensure they would be in their offices in order to obtain photos of them

receiving their goody bags for posting on social media, but most faculty were not available at the

same time. Instead, the faculty members were invited to come to the library to pick up the goody

bag at their own convenience. During each faculty member's visit, a library staff member took a

photo of the faculty member with the large student-signed cards to emphasize how grateful

students are for faculty contributions to affordability efforts. For one of the visits, two student

representatives from SGA were present for the photo and to personally thank the faculty

member.

The use of social media to publicly display the hand-off of the goody bag provided social

proof for faculty seeing their admired colleagues being thanked for their important efforts. The

goody bag initiative was also completely positive, as it did not invoke textbook costs or single

out faculty who did not choose to use an open textbook for whatever reason. The uplifting photos

merely provided examples of CSU's support and commitment toward affordability efforts, and a

clear path to gratitude. Photos posted on social media can be found in Appendix 4.

Results

As a result of this campaign, 58 faculty from 26 departments received direct outreach

from the library, 33 of whom were not Textbook Affordability Grant winners. Four faculty were

featured on the library's social media, and 15 faculty received a library goody bag. Before this

campaign, most outreach to faculty about open education came in the form of email invitations to

apply for a grant or attend a workshop. Direct, targeted library outreach to faculty about textbook

affordability clearly increased as a result of the campaign. The outreach was more public (it was

more visible to other faculty), positive (it did not ask faculty to do anything or reiterate the issue

of textbook costs), and inclusive (it targeted many more faculty than previous outreach).

Unfortunately, the goal of the gratitude campaign — increased engagement from faculty

in our affordability efforts — is very challenging to assess. Some anecdotal feedback from

faculty about the campaign included comments like, "Thank you so much! Who would refuse a

gift under these lovely circumstances?", "That's very nice of you all! … Thanks so much for the

goody bag!", "I think faculty should also be thanking you and your team for the great support

and encouragement throughout the process", and "That's so nice for you all to do that!" The

campaign's social media posts received engagement from four individuals and were shared two

times. Overall, faculty who participated were very positive about the experience.

Beyond just engaging faculty champions, an important objective of the initiative was to

increase engagement by faculty who had not been previously involved CSU's affordability

program. It is not possible to fully isolate the effect of our campaign, and the influence of the

COVID-19 pandemic may have been significant; however, the number of faculty Affordable

Learning Grant applications received in fall of 2019 (before the campaign) was three, and the

number received in spring of 2020 (after the campaign) jumped to twelve, the most the program

had ever received in one semester. One of the spring applicants was a previous winner who had

lost touch with the library for several years, but who had a very positive reaction to the gratitude campaign. Ten other applicants had never been involved in CSU's affordability initiative before as a grant or award winner, so the applications represented an influx of new faculty advocates to serve as models for their colleagues.

While it may be difficult to link the gratitude campaign with increased engagement in the affordability program, positive faculty feedback, an increase in grant applications, and engagement from a fresh group of faculty were the desired objectives when the campaign began. Based on the first, positive experience, the library will continue to deliver the campaign, as well as track engagement with affordability efforts as gratitude campaign activities are reintroduced in future semesters.

Discussion

Despite the initial success of the gratitude campaign, many of the typical challenges of promoting open education remain, and efforts to change campus culture will, of course, require continued efforts. When the challenges that faculty face include a lack of open options, lack of ancillaries (accompanying material for a textbook, such as test banks), or a deep commitment to their current, commercial textbook, alternative strategies will need to be employed to support open education adoption. As Ivie and Ellis (2018) point out, "OER advocacy requires consistent and comprehensive effort."

In addition, not everything went smoothly in implementing the campaign. There were challenges in agreeing how best to give thanks without overwhelming or alienating the faculty, and there were difficulties in working with stakeholders who were not able to help throughout the entirety of the campaign (e.g., the SGA representative left mid-campaign for a job). In the future, instead of expecting faculty to be available to receive their goody bags all at the same

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time, the library will schedule times for faculty to pick them up when it is most convenient.

Future efforts will also need to consist of mostly or fully online outreach activities, as most of

our faculty will not be on campus as much as usual due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite

these challenges, all parties involved learned much from the process, and the library hopes to

offer an even more smoothly implemented and successful program again in the future.

Even librarians who are just beginning their affordability programs will encounter faculty

who have been worried about textbook costs and helping students cope, perhaps for years. These

early affordability champions are an ideal audience for a gratitude campaign. Below are some

potential applications of this case study for those considering reaching out to thank faculty:

1. **Maintain a list of faculty who are making efforts to save students money**. It can be

   very challenging to get a sense of what course materials faculty are actually using in their

   classrooms. If faculty or students share information about specific efforts to reduce

   textbook costs, keep a running list of these individuals. Not only can these affordability

   advocates make great gratitude campaign recipients, but having their names listed allows

   them to be specifically invited to participate in other outreach events and efforts.

2. **Get help from many stakeholders**. Likely there are many people on campus who care

   about textbook affordability. Try to include them in the planning for a gratitude campaign

   — it can be a positive experience for them as well. This can be an especially good

   opportunity to encourage student advocacy, since gratitude campaigns are so positive in

   nature.

3. **Consider how to scale up gratitude projects without adding a lot of time and effort**.

   Plan ahead for future efforts, especially when funding is tight. Keep messages generic so

   items can be reused and create extra materials that can be used in the future.

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4. **Be creative.** A hallmark of CSU's gratitude campaign was that it extended thanks to faculty when there was no additional funding to offer them. Consider what skills colleagues have and employ them to show gratitude. For example, many of CSU's grant winners did not have professional photos, so the campaign was able to provide that added value for them. Thinking of these positive outreach strategies may require some creativity.

5. **Follow up with actions for faculty who are now part of the effort**. Unfortunately, implementing a gratitude campaign is only the beginning. After helping faculty feel a sense of belonging in an affordability program, reach out to them and make a specific ask, whether that is to pilot an open textbook, participate in a grant program, or attend an open textbook workshop. Do not allow your campaign to lose momentum!

Many of the psychology-based strategies of the gratitude campaign could be used to improve any library outreach effort. Reframing faculty behavior rather than focusing on changing attitudes, making small asks that build up to larger ones, providing opportunities for faculty to demonstrate social proof, and keeping messaging certain and positive can help improve the results of a library outreach program without requiring additional funding.

At a differently-sized institution, the gratitude campaign strategy could be adapted to scale up or down, as appropriate. Regardless of the number of faculty on a particular campus, a gratitude campaign that publicly thanks faculty, remains positive, and includes as many affordability advocates as possible can contribute to a campus culture change. Any campus initiative will need to be catered to the specific campus that is being targeted, but these ideas can help a library begin its campaign on the right foot.

Conclusion

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While textbook affordability grant programs and awards have allowed many campuses to make great progress, changing the culture of an institution requires a variety of strategies and persistent, ongoing work. A gratitude campaign is one strategy that does not require additional financial resources and can take advantage of social proof and other psychological heuristics. Showing thanks for the risks and effort that faculty are willing to assume for the benefit of their students is a positive way to widen the net of stakeholders in an open education initiative. Combined with other faculty outreach activities, a gratitude campaign can help libraries build a coalition, strengthen partnerships, and cultivate a positive campus culture in which open education can thrive.

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Appendix 1. Provost Email

TO: Textbook Affordability Grant Recipient
FROM: OER Committee, Provost's Office
RE: Recognizing Contributions to Open Education & Affordable Course Materials, 2019

Dear X,

Thank you for your efforts to use Open Educational Resources (OERs), free content, or library licensed materials as a substitute for commercial materials in your 2019 course(s). Increasing the use of OERs and other free content aligns closely with Cleveland State University's Strategic Plan, and it benefits our overall goal to improve student achievement and retention. We recognize your use of OER or affordable course materials as a form of academic leadership that advances innovation in teaching and learning with effects beyond your classroom.

Data shows that contributions like yours result in significant positive impacts for student learning.

- The cost of traditional textbooks can be a barrier for students.[1]
- Studies show using OER produces equal or improved student learning outcomes compared to traditional textbooks.[2]
- Global adoption of OER has saved students $1 billion since 2013 ($900M in US & CA higher education).[3]

Your 2019 adoption of BOOK/RESOURCE TITLE (OER/library content) as a required text for COURSE # saved your students $X (based on the replacement of a $100 commercial textbook).

If you receive student course comments related to your selection of affordable course materials, we encourage you to share them with us. We also hope you will include this letter in your promotion and tenure file as evidence of innovative teaching that supports student success at CSU.
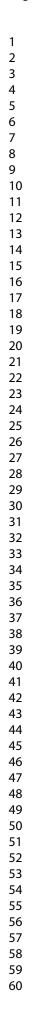
Sincerely,

1. https://studentpirgs.org/sites/student/files/reports/National%20-%20COVERING%20THE%20COST.pdf

2. https://openedgroup.org/review

3. https://sparcopen.org/news/2018/1-billion-in-savings-through-open-educational-resources/
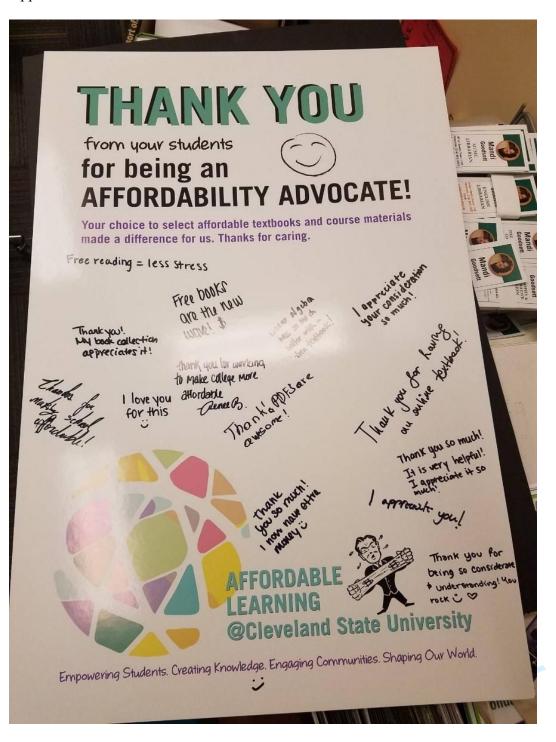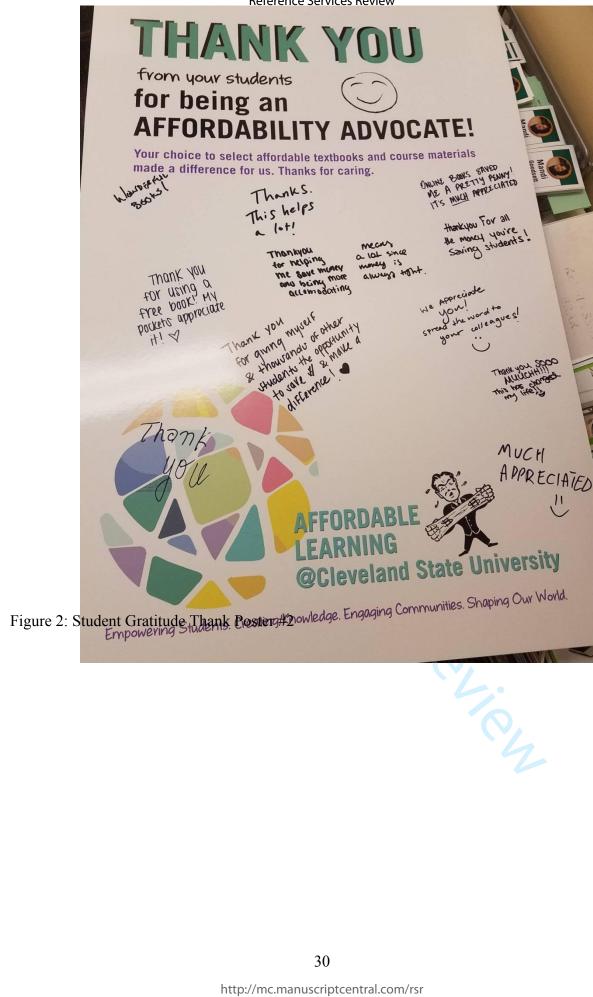
Appendix 2. Student Thank You Cards
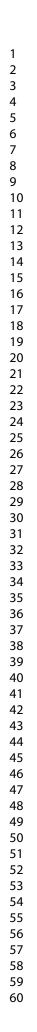

Figure 1: Student Gratitude Thank Poster #1

Figure 2: Student Gratitude Thank Poster #2

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Appendix 3. Door Hanger Design

Figure 3: Door hanger design in context

Figure 4: Thank you door hanger design

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Appendix 4. Goody Bag Delivery Social Media Posts

Cleveland State University Library
March 6 ·

March 2nd-6th is Open Education Week. Today, we would like to thank Shawn Ryan, Assistant Professor in the Mathematics department, for using open educational resources in his MTH 288 class @sdr17 @CSUSGA #oeweek #AffordabilityAdvocate

openeducationweek.org
#oeweek

Join
the global event

OEWEEK 2020

Celebrating Faculty members that have adopted/adapted open educational resources

Thank you Professor Ryan for saving your students over $22,000/year

SGA Representatives, Jake and Atia (L) with Shawn Ryan (R)