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Brief Project Description: Equity Through OER Rubric Pilot Project

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Equity Through OER Rubric Pilot Project

Brief Project Description



University of Northern Colorado Institutional Profile

Board Adopted Mission (2000)

The University of Northern Colorado (the University) shall be a comprehensive baccalaureate and specialized graduate research university with selective admission standards. The University shall offer a comprehensive array of baccalaureate programs and master's and doctoral degrees primarily in the field of education. The University has statewide authority to offer graduate programs for the preparation of educational personnel.

Vision Statement

The University of Northern Colorado will be the institution that Colorado looks to as the future of higher education. Our students will experience a personalized education grounded in liberal arts and infused with critical and creative inquiry; establish relationships with faculty and staff that nurture individual development; gain the skills and knowledge that provide upward mobility among alumni; and share a commitment to the values of inclusion, equity, and diversity.

Five Key Vision Elements

Students First, Empower Inclusivity, Enhance & Invest, Innovate & Create, Connect & Celebrate
<https://www.unco.edu/strategic-plan/vision-elements/>

Number of students served

9,380 (6,728 undergraduate, 2652 graduate)

Distinguishing features

UNC has long served under-represented students, with 42% of students being first-generation, and 29% Pell eligible, both significantly higher than Colorado's other research universities.

UNC is an emerging Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and is actively working toward HSI status. <https://www.unco.edu/hsi/>

Current Readiness

UNC aspires to have widespread adoption of OER and free-to-students course materials. As a campus, we have made progress through the work of the UNC OER Committee <https://libguides.unco.edu/OERcommittee> and Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) grant funding awards during the past five years, for which UNC's provosts have



provided matching funds. We have created and provided professional development programming to interested faculty. We have surveyed students and faculty to get their perspectives on OER and course materials costs. A research project found that course completion rates were higher in courses that used OER: a 9% increase in completion for first generation students, an 8% increase in completion for Pell-grant eligible students, and a 10% increase in completion for under-represented minority students (Mayer, 2023).

While noting and celebrating our successes, we struggle with the following: tracking OER use, course markings, articulating how OER fits with our strategic objectives and how equity is integrated in our OER work, and moving to wider adoption in the form of zero-textbook cost programs and degrees. While there is agreement that OER and affordable learning are important to students and faculty, we have not had ongoing overarching conversations with all stakeholders at various levels. UNC recently developed a position of Vice President for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion who oversees multiple centers and services across campus with the aim of bringing DEI into all university work.

Project Lead and Team Members

Jen Mayer, Associate Professor and Interim Assistant Dean of the Libraries. Chair, OER Committee and Member, HSI Steering Committee

- Project Lead, Outlines framework for project, writes gap analysis, action plan, case study, and final report

Oscar Levin, Associate Professor of Mathematical Sciences. Chair, Faculty Senate Academic Policies Committee

- Team Member, Designs and analyzes project data, provides input into project deliverables

Stakeholder Engagement Plans

Use of the DOERS3 rubric is an opportunity to engage a variety of students, faculty, staff, and university administrators in conversations about the prevalence of OER on campus and its connection to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Not only will conducting interviews, focus groups, and surveys of these key stakeholders provide valuable data about the extent and impact of OER, and how it currently intersects or not with the DOERS3 *Equity through OER Rubric*, we hope that it will raise awareness and invigorate new champions of OER and DEI.

We will develop a systematic and evidence-based information gathering process and assessment, with a focus on equity and students. The first part of our work (early spring 2023) will focus on using the DOERS3 rubric to guide and advance campus conversations and gather information via interviews, focus groups, and surveys. The second part of our efforts would involve the development of an action plan, creation of our case study, and submission of the final report.

In order to gather the information for the rubric dimensions, we identified the following relevant campus groups and individuals.



Students

- Student Senate President Erin Pettorino
- Registrar Charlie Couch
- Leaders of Cultural Centers
- Assistant Vice President for Marketing and Communications Debbie Farris
- Assistant Vice President for Students Academic Success Stephanie Torrez
- Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Services Cedric Howard

Practitioners

- Faculty Senate Chair Dawit Senbet
- Interim Libraries Dean Jayne Blodgett
- Information Management and Technology Phil Wyperd, Derek Herbert
- Assistant Provost for Academic Effectiveness Kim Black
- Director of Center for the Enhancement Teaching and Learning Lyda McCartin
- Director of the University Center (Bookstore) Jay Dinges
- Director of the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness Sonia Brandon
- UNC OER Committee

Leadership

- Provost Kirsty Fleming
- Vice Provost for Academic Resources and Planning Jordan Barkley
- Associate Provost and Assistant Vice President for Undergraduate Studies Nancy Matchett
- Vice President for the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Tobias Guzmán
- Associate Vice President of Research & Dean of the Graduate School Jeri-Anne Lyons
- Members of the Academic Affairs Leadership Team, which includes Deans

Defining Success

While campus leaders are supportive of OER efforts as one of many mechanisms to support student success and improve equity, OER is often viewed as just one of many approaches to achieve these goals.

To us, a successful pilot of the DOERS3 *Equity through OER* means:

- Learning of existing and new connections between the OER and DEI initiatives on our campus
- Raising awareness of the impact OER can have and highlight ways we can improve student outcomes through widespread adoption of OER
- Identifying the institutional mechanisms that need to be implemented in order for widespread adoption of OER through an equity lens is an institutional priority

We expect that engaging with the rubric will demonstrate a need to improve our tracking of OER adoption on campus, a need for increased communication regarding OER to students, and a need to build more systemic institutional support for this effort.