

# Carolina Open Educational Resources

**Background:** Open Educational Resources is a movement to develop and utilize open, shared reusable course materials. The concept is relatively new, and associated with related movements like Open Access, Electronic Textbooks, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), and OpenCourseWare. This is an opportune time for UNC to engage in a discussion of OERs at UNC as we have been approached by organizations offering to support OERs, and we are considering MOOCs and Electronic Textbooks currently, as well as continuing efforts at supporting Open Access on campus.

**Plan:** To evaluate the positives and negatives of providing campus level support for faculty who choose to make course improvements, including the use or development of Open Educational Resources as course materials.

**Goals:** If the campus believes OERs should be supported, then we would like to develop an OER program supporting these goals:

- Improve courses and learning outcomes at UNC
- Significantly reduce the cost of educational materials for students taking courses at UNC
- Produce open shared course materials that can be utilized by other institutions
- Become a visible leader in developing open educational resources, both at the state and national levels

At this point a campus work group consisting of faculty, library and CFE staff has done an initial investigation of OERs and an evaluation of their adoption at other institutions. We are now in the process of approaching and engaging groups on campus that can contribute to a balanced discussion about supporting OERs on campus. We will investigate whether a program supporting OERs at UNC is desirable, and if so, draft a plan for supporting OERs at UNC. We have become aware that there are potential challenges to use of OERs such as the following:

- Finding and developing quality materials
- Intellectual property and copyright concerns
- Financial income concerns
- Technological and sustainability questions

Based on our preliminary research, we believe it is possible for there to be a significant positive impact through the increased adoption of OERs at UNC. However, to be successful, an initiative of this type needs to anticipate and respond to concerns and challenges such as those listed above.

We hope that you are interested in participating in this discussion.

Brad Hemminger, Associate Professor, School of Information and Library Science  
Chair, Ad-hoc OER Campus Committee