

Open Education Resources (OER) Spring 2018 Focus Groups Report

PREPARED BY OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS
GOLDEN WEST COLLEGE

Zero-Cost Textbook Courses

During the Spring 2018 semester the Office of Institutional Effectiveness conducted three focus groups with College Success classes to learn about students experiences and exposure to Open Educational Resources or “Zero-Cost Textbook Courses”. The findings from these three focus groups are included in this report.

Highlights:

- Class 1: 6 out of 22 (27%) students have heard of “Zero Textbook Cost” courses.
- Class 2: 5 out of 32 (16%) students have heard of “Zero Textbook Cost” courses.
- Class 3: 8 out of 34 (24%) students have heard of “Zero Textbook Cost” courses.
- 18 out 22 (82%) of students shared that they have been in or are enrolled in at least one course that they purchased a book for, but did not utilize the book in the course.
- Students identify the current graphic being used for this as “a little black box” and not a textbook
- Students recommend increasing publicity about this program through:
 - A banner on the GWC homepage
 - A website page you get to from the GWC homepage banner or from Class Scheduler to learn more about this
 - Include blurb and website link in e-mail notification that is sent to students letting them know that it is their time to register for courses
 - Include as part of the Orientation video and training new students have to go through
 - Post on all GWC Social Media outlets
 - Create a video no more than 45 seconds that can be shared on social media and be included on the program’s website
- Current name works as is and is identifiable
- Branding- need to create a better graphic for students to identify with Zero-Cost Textbook courses

Details:

1. Do you feel that Golden West College makes an effort to make college affordable for students?
 - “GWC does do a good job of trying to make college more affordable, but there is a need for more publicity to let students know what programs and resources are available. For example, Puente, EOP&S and CalWorks, along with other programs that can benefit low-income students.”
 - “If it was not for the Puente program, I would not have been aware of all the programs and resources available to us.”
 - “GWC allows you to borrow laptops if you need them.”
 - “There are resources for single moms.”
 - “I receive a lot of e-mails from the college with different financial aid options.”

- “The college helped me understand that I could apply for the BOG waiver.”
2. Can you please walk me through your process of looking for classes to enroll in?
- Probe- How do you search for classes? Do you do this alone? Do you look over classes with a counselor?
 - When deciding what classes to enroll in, what are some of the things you take into consideration when making your decision?
- “Research the professors by talking to other students, current professors and ratemyprofessor.com” (over half of the students in all three courses used this approach)
 - “We meet with our counselor and decide on which classes we will be taking next semester that aligns with our education plan.”(multiple students)
 - “Rely on friends to help them choose their courses.”
 - “Need to see a counselor to determine that you will take, during your time at GWC.”
 - “When choosing your classes on your own, you just have to go based on your own opinion, but when looking for classes to take, if you have friend next to you, their opinion will weigh in heavy on your decision.”
 - “In Puente, we have a list of Professors that past Puente students recommend.”
 - “I would rather have someone I know in the class with me so we can both survive, and get through it together. That outweighs the professor’s ratings.”
 - “Look at the times that the courses are offered at. I also look at the course descriptions, and the capacity of the class to see who the popular professors are. Lastly, I do look at the ISBNs for the course textbooks to compare the costs between what is offered online vs. what the cost may be at the Bookstore.”
 - “I have an older brother that currently attends GWC, so I ask him for recommendations.”

Four different ways of exploring what courses are available to register for classes:

- GWC Home Page → Class Schedule Tab on top (add screenshot) this way does not show you the co-requisites, etc.)
 - MyGWC → Registration tab → Look Up Classes
 - MyGWC → Registration tab → Add or Drop Classes
 - MyGWC → Registration tab → Open Schedule Planner
3. Have you ever heard or learned about the existence of “Zero Textbook Cost Courses”? If yes, who, what, or how did you learn about “Zero Textbook Cost Courses”?
- “One of my professors mentioned “Zero-Cost textbooks in class” (3 students)
 - “I was trying to add a class while meeting with my counselor, and my counselor told me which course was zero textbook cost” (2 students)
 - “Communications professor. I didn’t know it was a zero textbook cost course, but it was a relief when the professor was going over the syllabus and shared that we did not have to purchase any books for that course. This saved me a lot of money, and it was also accessible on the go.”
 - “Not having to pay for textbooks is a relief. However, looking at a screen hurts my eyes. I prefer to have a printed version to highlight and touch.” (2 students)

- “I agree with making textbooks affordable, but as far as making it free, you are not going to value what you are investing in. That is because if it is free, you probably will not access the book because it is not costing you anything. But, I do not agree with books costing \$200. \$45 is reasonable. This is like getting handed a trophy without having put any work in to earn it.”
 - “Digital Media professor told students to purchase book, and then professor did not even use book because he claimed it was ‘outdated’. It’s frustrating to spend our money on textbooks that we are not going to use in the class. That is the case in this class as well. I bought the English and Counseling books, and we only used them for 2 weeks out of the entire semester.”
 - 18 out 22 (82%) of students shared that they have been or are in at least one course that they purchased a book for, but did not utilize the book in the course.
 - “There are nice professors out there that tell you that you have the option to buy an online or printed version, given students’ various learning styles.”
 - “The best, would be for students to have the option for printed or digital versions”
 - “It all depends on students’ learning preferences. Even if the textbooks are free and online, I will still go and buy a printed version.” (3 students)
 - “I am more likely to buy new books for my major courses, but not necessarily for GE courses.”
 - “Digital is more helpful, because the printed course textbooks can get heavy.”
 - “I recommend letting students know about Audiobooks, to help with their learning styles.”
4. Would you recommend taking a zero textbook cost course?
- “I would definitely recommend it. It is good to know that the courses will not require books that will cost more money.”
5. Do you know how to identify “Zero Textbook Cost Courses” on Class Scheduler?
- NOTE: Pull up Class Scheduler to show them how “Zero Textbook Cost Courses are identified.
 - “When searching for classes, I select the term and subject and then look at everything, and then start deselecting, based on when they are offered.”
 - 2 students identified scrolling through all courses until you see “the black box, next to the CRN” which tells you that it is a zero textbook cost course.
6. What are your suggestions for ways that GWC can make it easier for students to learn about “Zero Textbook Cost Courses”? (E-mail, counseling session, etc.)
- “Have a section on the GWC homepage that this exists.”
 - “When the email notification that it is your time to register is sent to students, there can be a line with a link to this program’s website letting them know that these courses are available.”
 - “Include it in the New Student Orientation, so students are aware of this from the beginning of their time here at GWC.”
 - “This should be advertised on the GWC homepage as one of the banners” (over half of the students agreed on this approach)

- “Share on GWC social media outlets.”
 - “There should be a big presence when having events to let current and prospective students aware of these courses.”
 - “If GWC produces a video about this to put on social media it should be no longer than 45 seconds.”
 - “This video can also be included on this program’s website which people will get to, once they click on the GWC home page banner.”
7. Is “Zero Textbook Cost” something that you understand and can identify, or do you have recommendations on how we can change the name of this to make it easier for people to identify?
- “The most successful brands have the simplest name. This name tells the audience exactly what it is ‘zero textbook cost course.’”
8. With regards to branding, what are your recommendations for graphics to help you identify these zero textbook cost courses?
- “The color scheme does not work”
 - “It is hard to understand that the logo is a book
 - “Something simple, like how Apple has an apple.”
 - “The word ‘BOOKS’ with a circle and a cross”
 - “An open book, with a circle and a cross.”
 - “‘NO’ with the ‘\$’”
 - “Choose an image of a book that is more identifiable.”
 - “There is a need on Class Scheduler to have a KEY so we can identify that the book image is for zero cost textbooks courses.”
 - “Provide a link to the zero-cost textbook program website”
 - “You should be able to click on the graphic and it should take you to a description or website to learn more about it.”