# Leading an Open Revolution: Promoting Awareness of Open Resources through an Interdisciplinary Learning Community

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## Abstract

This article discusses the case study of an interdisciplinary faculty learning community (FLC) focused on open practices and resources. The community, which was facilitated by three academic librarians, explored the case as a framework for open outreach and advocacy on a university campus. Composed of participants across disciplines and academic departments, the FLC created a setting for librarians and teaching faculty to explore open education topics together from divergent perspectives and degrees of experience. In this article, the authors present the FLC case as a collaborative model for forging relationships on campus and consider its effectiveness as an outreach and advocacy strategy for academic libraries.

## Keywords

*Peer Reviewed Article*

# Leading an Open Revolution: Promoting Awareness of Open Resources through an Interdisciplinary Learning Community

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**Abstract**

This article discusses the case study of an interdisciplinary faculty learning community (FLC) focused on open practices and resources. The community, which was facilitated by three academic librarians, explored the case as a framework for open outreach and advocacy on a university campus. Composed of participants across disciplines and academic departments, the FLC created a setting for librarians and teaching faculty to explore open education topics together from divergent perspectives and degrees of experience. In this article, the authors present the FLC case as a collaborative model for forging relationships on campus and consider its effectiveness as an outreach and advocacy strategy for academic libraries.

**Keywords:** faculty learning communities, open educational practices, outreach and advocacy, faculty collaboration, communities of practice, professional development, faculty development

## Introduction

Academic libraries often lead outreach and advocacy programs at their institutions to promote open practices and open educational resources (OER). Common library initiatives to support the creation and adoption of OER include grant programs, workshops, one-on-one consultations, and special group presentations. To be effective, librarians must design outreach and advocacy activities to meet the needs of their campus community while simultaneously engaging in professional development to maintain their own expertise in the ever-evolving open movement. This article presents a case study for a collaborative outreach and advocacy model to expand campus conversations on open topics and encourage the adoption of open practices. It examines interdisciplinary learning communities as a framework for collaborative learning and professional development among faculty and librarians to illustrate how meaningful group exploration can encourage a cultural shift towards openness.

At the authors' institution, administrative support and incentive to develop interdisciplinary learning communities among faculty, staff, administration, and students exist through an internal grant opportunity available to librarians and faculty as part of institutional support for faculty development. The institutional objectives of the Interdisciplinary Faculty Seminar Fund include strengthening cross-disciplinary and inter-departmental collaborations in scholarship, teaching, and learning, as well as promoting the integration and incorporation of diverse intellectual, social, and cultural perspectives into curricula. The fund's structure and objectives correspond to a type of community of practice known as a faculty learning community (FLC). In the spring of 2020, three faculty librarians from different functional areas within the library – research and instruction, technical services, and digital services – applied for the faculty development grant as a case study to assess the effectiveness of collaborative learning communities for open advocacy on their campus. In organizing an FLC, the authors sought to raise awareness for and encourage the adoption of open practices and affordable course materials among teaching faculty while also creating the structure and space to support professional development for librarians.

This article discusses the FLC model, explores its history and implementation by other librarians, and considers the unique opportunity FLCs present for open advocacy. The authors examine the successes and challenges of facilitating a learning community focused on the open movement and present details of the case, including logistics, meeting topics, and assessment. Through discussion of their experience and an examination of related literature, the authors argue for librarian-led FLCs as both an innovative and effective approach to open outreach and advocacy.

**Literature Review**

Within the literature, discussion of faculty-librarian collaboration often focuses on pedagogical partnerships in the classroom and information literacy programs. Likewise, open outreach and advocacy by academic libraries are well documented in scholarship, but there is significantly less discussion of campus culture-building via communities of practice on open topics as an outreach and advocacy strategy.

*Open Outreach and Advocacy*

A review of the literature on open outreach and advocacy by academic libraries demonstrates that librarians are taking leadership roles to foster openness on campus and encourage the development and adoption of OER. Librarians have reported on a wide range of outreach activities, programs, and initiatives across institutions that vary significantly in size and scope. Common themes tied to open advocacy by academic libraries include programming around Open Access Week and Open Education Week, faculty workshops, grant initiatives, one-on-one consultations, special group presentations, and pedagogical partnerships.[1] Jhangiani explores what the author describes as an identity crisis around OER advocacy and considers both pragmatic approaches by libraries (emphasizing benefits like cost savings) as well as ideological ones (reframing permissions and arguing for radical change) in the open movement.[2] Numerous studies have focused on the impacts of OER use in the classroom and investigated student perspectives on their use as well as their efficacy.[3,4]

Successful strategies to promote the adoption and creation of OER through incentive programs and grant-based support for faculty are well documented in library literature. Dawson outlines a qualitative study investigating effective strategies and practices for library outreach on open access in the United Kingdom.[5] Presented in the research findings are suggestions

for librarians who struggle to communicate with faculty on open topics, including how to build their expertise and competency to foster strong relationships. Salem, Jr., explores the current state of library-led and multi-institutional programs to support the creation and adoption of OER while also considering future directions for library initiatives.[6] The article identifies several affordable content programs led by academic libraries, including the Open Education Initiative at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, UCLA's Affordable Textbook Initiative, and the Partnership for Affordable Content at the University of Minnesota, to name only a few examples.[7]

Lambert notes that the conversation around OER "has expanded outwards […] to an interest in a broader set of Open Educational Practices (OEP)."[8] Mishra also discusses moving beyond the use of OER, writing, "OER are just one aspect of the bigger ecosystem of education for sustainable development."[9] However, there has been some concern about the absence of faculty in the discussions of open education. In 2018, Roberts discussed instructors being "often the minority" at events about open education.[10] Champieux, Thomas, and Versluis explore feelings of isolation that open advocates and scholarly communication librarians share as a result of a lack of understanding and support from organizational and institutional colleagues.[11] The article discusses some of the conditions that hinder progress in making behavioral and cultural changes to support open advocacy.

*Faculty Learning Communities*

Faculty learning communities are cross-disciplinary groups, typically composed of six to fifteen members, who "engage in an active, collaborative, yearlong program with a curriculum about enhancing teaching and learning with frequent seminars and activities that provide learning, development, the scholarship of teaching, and community building."[12] Topic-based FLCs are

designed to address a "special campus teaching and learning need, issue, or opportunity."[13] FLCs share several characteristics including developing a culture of openness and trust among the group, empowering its participants, and encouraging community. Some of the common objectives among FLCs include increasing collaboration across disciplines and creating an awareness of a complex issue related to teaching and learning. Cox stresses the importance of collaboration to achieve a community's learning outcomes and notes that this largely depends on an atmosphere of openness, respect, and empowerment.[14]

Library literature includes a breadth of research and practice articles on the many collaborative ways academic librarians partner with faculty to promote the adoption and creation of open materials. However, librarian-led FLCs are an under-examined collaborative framework for open advocacy. Though many scholarly articles report on FLCs facilitated by librarians, there are few examples of librarians adopting the FLC model specifically as an open advocacy strategy. Bazeley, Waller, and Resnis describe an FLC on scholarly communication at Miami University composed of faculty, graduate students, staff, and librarians.[15] While discussions encompassed a broad spectrum of scholarly communication issues, like journal economics and predatory publishing, the group did explore open access and open data among their session topics. Librarians at Miami University have a long and innovative history of facilitating FLCs, and they organized an annual FLC focused on information literacy from 2004 to 2012 to enhance their library instruction program through cross-disciplinary and collaborative methods.

The majority of scholarship on FLCs facilitated by librarians either discusses disciplinary-based communities or topic-based communities on themes outside of open practices and resources. Mi discusses the establishment of a FLC at a

new medical school at their institution.[16] The author argues that a library's role in community building and connecting people with shared interests represents a social role for libraries. Speaking about librarian-led FLCs, Mi posits that "[e]mbracing or embedding learning communities of students or faculty in an academic unit or across the university campus would add a new dimension to the traditional domains for libraries and thus expand the functional areas of libraries."[17] Mi goes on to argue that "establishing and running a FLC was a way to practice 'need-based librarianship' by assisting the medical school with faculty development for the purpose of improving teaching and student learning."[18]

Burress, Mann, and Neville describe a case study for a librarian-led FLC on data literacy at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg.[19] The authors point out that many librarian-led FLCs center on "topics in which librarians typically have high levels of expertise, which affects group dynamic and may limit librarians' opportunity for collaborative learning alongside faculty."[20] Importantly, their article suggests how value can be added when librarians and faculty are learning together within a structured collaborative environment. Burress et al. argue that "librarians should go further and also propose FLCs in areas of teaching and learning that they themselves wish to explore," and the authors explain that "choosing a topic where librarians can learn along with the faculty [...] provided a valuable framework for collaboration with our faculty colleagues."[21]

FLCs are one type of community of practice that focus on supporting the advancement of teaching and learning at institutions of higher education. Communities of practice (CoP) are frameworks for collaborative learning in a wide range of contexts both educational and institutional. Wenger-Trayner characterize CoPs as groups with a shared domain of interest that join in regular activities and discussions to develop a

shared set of resources and collective expertise.[22] In this way, librarians can collaboratively develop their expertise and confidence with open topics through communities of practice like FLCs, and they need not be experts in those topics to organize and facilitate the group. The community expands and strengthens their campus relationships, thereby also serving to extend their outreach and advocacy. Sinkinson and McAndrew describe employing the CoP model as a recurring professional development format aimed at building community at the University of Colorado Boulder.[23] Referred to as Special Interest Groups, the learning communities' objective was to expand campus conversations around open pedagogies and mitigate the sense of isolation that teaching can produce. They describe that "throughout these collaborations, we frequently encountered complements and alignment between our respective fields that presented new opportunities for conversation with the campus community."[24]

Smith and Lee describe how academic librarians in British Columbia, Canada, "joined together as a community of practice to learn and to share ideas, strategies, and tools to support the use of OER."[25] This group, known as the BCOER, focused on professional development for librarians to support their interactions with faculty and encourage the use of OER by faculty and students. For the BCOER librarians, creating a CoP was one way of accomplishing the training, mentoring, and internal support needed to broaden their professional expertise. Smith and Lee emphasize the need for academic librarians to evolve and "find new ways to rapidly and dynamically learn not only what is new and emerging in their field, but also what is new in higher education teaching and learning as a whole."[26] Likewise, Salem, Jr., discusses the importance of in-reach programs and professional development as a good way to "increase the awareness of open and affordable course re-

sources so that they can be infused in the general outreach and instructional efforts of many liaison programs."[27] The author goes on to point out that in-reach programs for professional development within the library can be expanded in the future to include faculty partners. Here, Salem, Jr. describes a similar type of FLC to the case study on which this article reports.

## Case Study Overview

*Grant Proposal*

To support strategic planning objectives, The University of Scranton and the Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Memorial Library defined shared goals to implement and explore initiatives to make education more accessible and affordable and to support the changing needs of students and their families. In 2019, the Library began an Affordable Learning Initiative that included campus presentations and grant funding for the adoption of OER. However, related areas of open, including open pedagogy, open access, open science, and open data, were not regularly supported or discussed on campus. Though from three different areas of librarianship and levels of open expertise, the authors shared a broad interest in open practices and a desire to facilitate campus conversations about how open resources, data, and technologies are impacting higher education. To expand their campus outreach and advance open advocacy across disciplines, the authors pursued an internal grant opportunity to organize a FLC that would also provide support for librarians' professional development.

The University offers various internal grant opportunities to teaching faculty and librarians throughout the academic year to support research and scholarship, curriculum development, and professional growth activities. The Interdisciplinary Faculty Seminar Fund, known as the Clavius Fund, awards successful seminar proposals a $1,500 grant to support and promote

interdisciplinary faculty engagement. The Clavius Fund is awarded once a year and funds do not extend past the awarded academic year. Funding received can be used for seminar reading materials, refreshments, and/or invited speaker events held in conjunction with the seminar. The goal of the Clavius Fund is "to promote interdisciplinary engagement and to foster a greater sense of colleagueship across departmental lines by creating settings whereby diverse faculty can explore a topic of mutual interest from divergent perspectives."[28]

Faculty who pursue funding to organize an interdisciplinary seminar must discuss in their proposal how they will accomplish at least one of the following grant goals:

- "Strengthen cross-disciplinary and inter-departmental collaborations in scholarship, teaching, and learning.

- Promote the integration or incorporation of diverse intellectual, social, and cultural perspectives into curricula;

- Advance the development and/or implementation of interdisciplinary or integrative pedagogies;

- Foster the development of integrative models of knowledge;

- Facilitate the development of student learning outcomes regarding integrative learning and in assessing integrative teaching approaches."[29]

Prior to pursuing the seminar grant, the authors developed an interest in learning communities through both internal experiences and familiarity with external FLCs. One author learned about a successful learning community at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania, that focused on open textbooks and OER in the spring of 2020. Two of the authors participated in interdisciplinary seminars in previous

academic years and recognized their functional similarity to FLCs. Additionally, two of the authors were already actively involved in their Library's Affordable Learning Initiative to introduce faculty to OER. Based on their knowledge of learning communities and shared commitment to open education and affordable learning advocacy, all three authors agreed to develop a proposal for a seminar focused on open practices in higher education for the 2020-2021 academic year, titled "Open Revolution."

Acknowledging that the term "open" holds different meanings, applications, and values across academic disciplines and departments, the authors sought to broaden teaching faculty's understanding of the term, challenge predetermined notions of open practices, and encourage the implementation of open resources in course curricula. Central to the seminar was the idea that openness can lead to a diversity of perspectives, experiences, and narratives being shared across traditional disciplinary boundaries. In view of this, the seminar was developed to address the many variations of "open" within academia and not just focus on one specific area in which certain faculty may already be knowledgeable. The series would afford opportunities for participants to learn how different disciplines contributed and reacted to open practices and resources, as well as consider broader changes in academic and scholarly culture.

The authors submitted their grant application in early March of 2020 and were notified the following month by the Office of the Provost that their proposal was awarded funding. See Appendix A for the "Open Revolution" grant proposal.

*Description and Participants*

The FLC, in this case study referred to as "the seminar," was open to all faculty and staff at the University to encourage participants from a variety of academic areas and disciplines. There was no application process or pre-requisites for participants. Getting the word out across campus about the seminar was a critical part of the recruitment process. Announcements sent to faculty and staff campus listservs were the first marketing approach. Recruitment was further pursued through targeted outreach to campus groups and partners. Information about the seminar was presented at meetings of the Library's Advisory Committee, which is composed of faculty representatives from academic departments across campus. The library orientation for first-year faculty also provided an opportunity to share the call for seminar participants. The authors hoped the seminar could provide a forum for new faculty to share their ideas and connect with new colleagues, especially during a challenging semester in fall of 2020 characterized by limited interactions with colleagues and pandemic-related restrictions. The authors capped participation at the first twenty registrants, mindful that a greater number of participants could inhibit broad involvement in discussions and complicate scheduling. In the authors' experiences, this number was consistent with these types of seminars at The University of Scranton. While the literature on FLCs recommends a smaller number of participants, the authors also recognized from their participation in previous seminars that not all registered participants were able to attend every meeting and, with it being an especially unique and challenging school year, smaller meetings were likely.

The authors planned the seminar as monthly, one-hour discussions that would explore a different branch of the open movement. Originally, the seminar was envisioned as in-person meetings with refreshments during the fall and spring semesters of 2020-2021. The COVID-19 pandemic and campus restrictions required the authors to modify the seminar format to fully remote via Zoom. Therefore, supplemental semi-

nar benefits and incentives, like in-person networking and refreshments, were unavailable. Additionally, due to the many complications that the rapid shift to online teaching presented for faculty, the authors delayed the seminar's start date from September to October. The seminar meetings were scheduled based on the highest number of available participants that were identified through Doodle polls.

Six faculty members and one administrator initially registered for the seminar. One additional faculty member joined during the fall semester and another joined after a second call for participants went out in the spring. Including the three authors, the total seminar group was comprised of twelve participants. Teaching faculty came from a variety of disciplines including health administration, mathematics, psychology, and physical therapy. The librarian participants covered many different functional areas in the library including research and instruction, technical services, digital services, and administration. The number of participants for each meeting varied due to scheduling conflicts. It is difficult to assess if attendance would have increased if the sessions were in person rather than over Zoom, but as Cox points out, eight to twelve participants is ideal within FLCs.[30] Inviting a guest speaker for a special event generated an increase in interest, bringing in nine new participants who had not previously participated in the seminar. For some participants, committing to monthly sessions may not have been feasible whereas attending an individual discussion was more manageable. The added stresses of pivoting to a new teaching environment during a pandemic likely also impacted attendance.

*Meeting Topics and Logistics*

Based on participants' suggestions and their own research, the authors collaboratively selected the seminar readings and shared them with participants one week prior to each meeting. Session topics were typically identified by

the seminar group through their discussions, and readings were selected by the authors that related to the topics of interest. Seminar participants were also invited to facilitate sessions and share readings based on their disciplinary expertise and interests. Along with scholarly literature, the authors wanted to include first-person perspectives that shared the personal aspects of open, including how various individuals became supporters of the movement and participated in the process. Discussion topics included open educational resources, open access, open pedagogy, open peer-review, and open-source software. The seminar readings also explored the rise of sharing platforms for research and scholarship and examined attitude shifts towards open resources among faculty and administrators. The authors worked together to develop discussion questions for each meeting based on the selected readings. The discussion questions helped ensure that the group conversation remained active and fostered engagement with the reading content. The seminar conversations flowed smoothly and typically would take up the entire hour.

While many open topics were addressed during meetings, the seminar was organized around the following themes that were of the most interest to participants:

- Introduction to Open
- Open Pedagogy
- Barriers to Open
- Open Access Publishing
- Open Educational Resources

Though the grant provided funding for acquiring print materials for participants, the authors decided to focus on openly-accessible resources for discussions to align with the seminar's goal to support open resources and practices. See Appendix B for a bibliography of the seminar readings.

The first seminar session focused on an introduction to the open movement for participants. The authors selected a book chapter that introduced many of the different academic areas involved in open practices, provided a baseline knowledge for seminar discussions, and prompted the group to identify future meeting topics. Open pedagogy emerged as the theme for the fall semester, while the spring semester meetings focused on barriers to openness, open access publishing, and OER.

To generate additional interest and participation in the seminar during the spring semester, the authors used a portion of their funding to organize a guest lecture via Zoom. The guest lecture was open to all faculty and staff and not limited to existing seminar participants. The lecture addressed the urgency of centering social justice approaches in open educational practices and the associated challenges. In collaboration with the University's Office of Equity and Diversity, the event received additional promotion through their website's list of diversity programs. The event was also publicized through university news announcements and campus listservs. Twenty staff and faculty from the University registered for the guest lecture, including many upper-level administrators from the Offices of Equity and Diversity, Student Life, Information Technology, Mission Integration, and Human Resources. Following the lecture, many registrants indicated their interest in attending the seminar and were invited to participate in the spring sessions.

**Assessment**

To assess the seminar, the authors developed two participant surveys. The initial survey was sent in advance of the first seminar meeting to obtain a baseline of what participants thought about openness and open resources. This survey also revealed areas of interest which informed discussion planning and reading selections. The second was a close-out survey to determine if participants' thoughts on openness changed after attending the seminar. While the focus of the seminar was to address a variety of "open" topics, the survey questions and responses focused more on open materials. The authors wanted to investigate thoughts on utilizing open materials, in particular, since the Weinberg Memorial Library encourages affordable education through its existing initiatives, and it is an area of expertise among the library faculty. The interest in open materials, specifically OER, was also reflected in the seminar discussions, even when it was not the main topic of the meeting.

The authors sought and received IRB approval for the surveys which were created in Google Forms. The surveys were disseminated to participating faculty and staff via email, and participants were informed that the survey did not collect any identifying information and were completely anonymous. Participation in the first survey was limited to the registrants of the seminar, excluding the authors, with nine respondents total. The second survey was open to any participant who had attended at least one seminar meeting during the academic year.

Participation in the second survey was markedly low with only two respondents. The survey was distributed at the end of the spring semester, which is a universally busy time for faculty, and virtually, which could have impacted engagement. Since it was such a small pool of respondents, no demographic information was collected to avoid the potential for identification. The authors did not gather information to distinguish between teaching faculty and library faculty to further ensure the respondents' anonymity.

In the first survey, participants were asked the following open-ended questions:

*Question 1.* How would you define "open"?

*Question 2.* Do you have any experience working with open materials? If so, please describe.

*Question 3.* What do you see as the value of open materials in relation to academia?

*Question 4.* Do you see any potential barriers to working with open materials?

Respondents defined "open" in response to Question 1 as "freely accessible" or "freely available." Others defined it as "accessible by users without cost," "without prohibition," and "lacking restriction or opacity in regards to access." One respondent noted that open "can apply to research, publication, teaching, licensing, and other avenues."

There were a variety of experiences with open materials described in the responses to Question 2, including "incorporating 'open' materials into a research class" and using "OER and open source software." Other responses described "publication in and use of open access articles," as well as involvement with Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) to help a professional association "begin a semi-open access journal." Responses also indicated some experiences working with book publishers to make some of their published materials open.

Respondents identified four areas of value for open materials in academia in response to Question 3: equity, affordability, collaboration, and freedom of inquiry. Equity of access to resources was considered important by one respondent, noting "especially on topics that may have been underrepresented in proprietary collections." Another respondent discussed the value in "increasing student (and scholars [sic]) access to scholarly materials both in developed and developing countries." One respondent spoke to affordability observing that open material "probably decreases financial and socio-economic status (SES) inequities." Another respondent noted that open collaboration and "the idea of scholarship being edited and agreed upon by consensus" was of great value. One response considered that open material "approaches the ideal of free (and respectful) marketplace of ideas." Finally, a respondent commented that being open "promotes informed citizens; enhances democratic processes and outcomes," which speaks to academic freedom and freedom of inquiry.

Question 4 asked participants to describe any potential barriers they saw to working with open materials. Responses identified three main perceived barriers: open materials as unreliable or of inferior quality, time constraints, and financial barriers. Respondents shared that "among certain groups, open materials still have a reputation for being unreliable or just not as good as proprietary sources" and identified that open resources can be "limited in scope and do not cover all topics in depth as needed for some areas of academia." The time involved in "determining the quality of an open resource" was seen as being "more time intensive than traditional determinations." Concerns included "loss of income to individuals, professional associations, higher ed institutions," as well as costs related to publishing "one's own research as open." Respondents noted choosing to publish openly as "a personal sacrifice" due to loss of profits from textbook sales, having to pay open access publication fees, and loss of prestige for choosing open over an in-print/for-profit prestigious venue. Other respondents expressed concerns over the "loss of control of the material" and having materials "transformed and misused in non-intended ways."

In the second survey that followed the completion of the seminar, participants were asked four open-ended questions:

*Question 1.* Did your definition or idea of "open" change throughout the discussions this year? If so, how?

*Question 2.* After discussing various open materials, what do you see as their value in relation to academia? In relation to the University?

*Question 3.* What barriers do you still see to creating or adopting/adapting open materials? Can you think of any ways to overcome them?

*Question 4.* Are there any issues related to open research and scholarship you would like to discuss through future programs/guest speakers?

In response to Question 1, respondents indicated that their definition or idea of "open" changed. One respondent felt they had a better understanding of open beyond the financial aspects and saw its equity dimensions as well. Another respondent answered that they were not familiar with the variety of licensing options and indicated that it had not occurred to them "that there is an important difference between open and accessible."

In response to Question 2, respondents saw open materials as "essential for the growth and future of academia and the University," including the value of open materials in addressing "equity issues (both financial and academic)" and to support "student success" at the University.

In response to Question 3, some common barriers persisted for respondents. One respondent noted that "there is often more work involved in utilizing OER, at least initially," but also pointed out that solutions to this barrier include programs like the Library's affordable learning grant. The same respondent observed that "misunderstandings" which surround the use of some types of open materials still pose problems, and went on further to note that "the way to overcome that is to keep pushing for it, keep explaining, keep pursuing open publishing opportunities." Another respondent still felt that "many people remain skeptical about the quality of open materials." Additionally, they noted that many individuals "who would otherwise want to publish open materials feel like their work will be perceived negatively if it is published in an open manner." This respondent also agreed that it is "useful to spread the word about open materials and help others to see the good that comes from open materials" as a solution to overcoming these barriers.

While respondents did not share specific areas for future programs or guest speakers related to open research and scholarship in the responses to Question 4, one respondent commented: "I think just continuing to provide a forum for discussions on open research and scholarship is really valuable."

**Analysis**

As both the literature and seminar grant proposal observe, there are a variety of definitions in higher education for the term "open." In this case study, most of the survey respondents' definitions referred to the absence of cost and accessibility to materials. And yet, another topic discussed in the literature regarding open practices, particularly in relation to OER, is the ability to build upon and revise materials as needed. As Mishra notes, "many people regard OER simply as any resource available free of cost, mostly on the Internet," but there are varying thoughts about whether something is considered an OER if it cannot have the 4Rs framework (reuse, revise, remix, and redistribute), or sometimes 5Rs (reuse, revise, remix, redistribute, and retain), applied to it.[31] Notably, none of the respondents mentioned the ability to revise or remix materials in their initial definition of "open."

Respondents of the exit survey shared that their definitions of "open" did change as a result of the seminar, which was one of its main goals. It may be significant that the guest speaker in February focused on moving beyond the financial aspects of open, citing Lambert's three areas of social justice in relation to open. Lambert calls for more exploration into open education research and practices as a social justice issue, discussing how the use and development of OER can contribute to redistributive, recognitive, and representational justice.[32] Other studies have noted that textbook costs can more adversely affect students who have loans, work more hours, have a lower income, are first-generation students, or self-identify as a visible minority or an ethnic/racial minority.[33,34]

Also notable was one respondent's comments on different licensing options and the difference between open and accessible. Creative Commons licensing, while not necessarily a focus of the seminar, came up frequently throughout the conversations.[35] Skidmore argues that one of the barriers to open education practices is the lack of clarity about publication rights, such as some colleges having intellectual property rights over an instructor's work.[36] Faculty surveyed by Seaman and Seaman also expressed interest in learning more about Creative Commons licensing as well as the differences between OER and fair use.[37] Their survey found that only 54% of surveyed faculty were "Aware" or "Very Aware" of Creative Commons licenses, much less than copyright (84%) and the public domain (72%). Based on the seminar and the literature, Creative Commons licensing could be a potential topic of workshops or future faculty engagement. In this way, the seminar helped identify future directions for open outreach and advocacy. This is also an area for continued professional development among the faculty librarians in the seminar who often field questions about Creative Commons licensing. Smith and Lee observe that "librarians often take on new roles

without relinquishing any of their other responsibilities," which presents a significant challenge in finding the time to sustain expertise in open practices to be effective advocates.[38] They point out that "a heavy and diverse workload may mean that having the opportunity to learn about and become an OER advocate may seem overwhelming to some librarians."[39] The FLC reported here provided the time and support to collaboratively learn in these emerging areas of librarianship.

The survey respondents came from a variety of background experiences with engaging with open materials. Though most of the open advocacy efforts by the Weinberg Memorial Library focus on OER, only one respondent specifically mentioned OER in their answer to Question 2 of the first survey regarding their previous experience with open materials. Two respondents mentioned open software, and two others mentioned their work with the use and publication of open access articles. One respondent mentioned producing a resource under a Creative Commons license.

Due to the variety of backgrounds, it was important the authors remain flexible with the discussion topics, providing readings that could serve as overview and background information for open practices but also expand upon previous knowledge or experiences. The authors also had to be responsive to the direction of the discussions themselves. As Bazeley, Waller, and Resnis observed with their FLC, there was sometimes a discrepancy between the topics they were planning on focusing on versus what the participants were most curious about.[40] The authors who led the seminar reported here initially planned for the "open" topic for discussion to change with each meeting, but open pedagogy created such a prolonged discussion that it was continued into a second meeting. Sinkinson and McAndrew looked for readings for their FLC they thought "would resonate most with faculty

while taking into consideration teaching experiences, time, and risk involved in changing teaching approaches," noting how they "prioritized case studies and first-hand accounts of open pedagogy to offer student and faculty testimonies while also providing practical blueprints for adaptation or adoption."[41] The seminar reported here followed a similar approach with the authors assisting with discussion, while participating faculty related the testimonials to their own personal experiences and those of their students. For example, participants saw similarities between their own practices and open pedagogical practices discussed in the articles, not having formally thought of them as open pedagogy.

There was agreement among participants on the value of open materials in relation to academia, focusing on aspects of equity, affordability, scholarly collaboration, and freedom of inquiry. This is not surprising since participation in the seminar was voluntary and likely based on some pre-existing interest in the subject. A few respondents first mentioned issues of equity in their responses before elaborating on other benefits of open materials. Three respondents specifically commented on the impact of open materials on publishing. One respondent felt open materials offered more opportunities for researchers to be involved in the publication process. Others noted that open materials can lead to "reconfiguring the scholarly publishing system" and can educate on "topics that may have been underrepresented in proprietary collections." While the Weinberg Memorial Library currently does not offer formalized support for open publishing, this may be a future area of exploration. Another outcome of the seminar was the discussion of publishing practices in general. Bazeley, Waller, and Resnis found their assumption that faculty had a "good, general idea of how journal publishing worked" was incorrect throughout their FLC discussions about scholarly communication.[42] Both during the seminar

and in their interactions with faculty, the authors frequently answered questions on current publishing practices and acquisitions of licensed materials, particularly regarding limitations on access and digital rights management. One added benefit to the FLC model was that the authors were able to demonstrate their expertise and share research projects with faculty outside the library, while simultaneously engaging in their own professional development.

Four of the respondents specifically mentioned a stigma or negative perception of open materials when discussing barriers to working with them. In the second survey, respondents reiterated this potential barrier, noting the skepticism and "misunderstandings" about open resources. A general anxiety about sharing open resources has also been reported by faculty around the scrutiny open resources might face by peers.[43] This is also reflected in responses to the first survey in one respondent's concern with the misuse of materials published openly. This apprehension is also found in the literature with faculty expressing concerns over the quality of open resources.[44] The final survey responses encouraged further discussion of open materials and suggested that more examples of "the good that comes from open materials" would be beneficial. Literature focused on efficacy and faculty testimonials can also supplement these conversations. Seaman and Seaman found that surveyed faculty rated their satisfaction with OER higher (89%) than their non-OER textbooks (85%).[45]

While FLC discussions can be instrumental in generating interest and funding for programs and initiatives, Skidmore also suggests putting "high-level open education policies and guidelines" in place.[46] This includes support for publishing under Creative Commons licenses and offering opportunities for professional recognition for open educational practices. Since the loss of financial income was noted as a concern

to one survey participant, programs offering financial incentives to publish openly may be an area for future exploration. The lack of support and recognition, particularly in the tenure process, for creating open works and incorporating open practices is often cited as a barrier.[47] Bond et al. noted that surveyed faculty also suggested the development of OER be included in the tenure process. And, the authors agree with Bond et al. that programs like FLCs can be "important additions to tenure-seeking faculty resumes."[48] The recognition of participating in FLCs in promotion or tenure reports can be useful if other steps, such as formalized tenure requirements and financial support for open publishing, are not possible. While not reflected in the survey, the relation between open materials and tenure was discussed in the seminar, with faculty reflecting on how their departments currently viewed open materials.

While the seminar was funded as a one-time program, and it would not be replicated on the same topic, it provided opportunities for new connections between teaching faculty and the librarians who led it. Participant interest in some of the narrower topics discussed, like Creative Commons, can lead to future programming for faculty. While the focus of the Clavius seminar was broad, it is possible that another FLC could be funded in the future around more-specific topics brought up throughout discussions and highlighting librarian expertise. Studies show that a lack of time and perceived ability to identify and evaluate OER can hinder adoption.[49] As Smith and Lee note, librarians are well-suited to navigating through these tasks. Demonstrating and discussing these skills in the learning community environment can lead to future partnerships and the adoption or creation of open materials. As identified earlier, FLCs provide an opportunity to strengthen cross-disciplinary and inter-departmental collaborations and provide a platform to share information about programs

and initiatives. As part of the last seminar meeting on OER, the authors had the opportunity to discuss the work the Weinberg Memorial Library was initiating related to affordable learning and the support that can be provided to faculty who want to move towards including open resources in their classrooms.

In an effort to reduce the financial burden on students, the Weinberg Memorial Library offers affordable learning grants as an incentive for faculty to eliminate expensive for-cost textbooks and course materials with no-cost or low-cost educational resources. These grants were mentioned in one respondent's answer as a way to start overcoming the barriers identified throughout the seminar's discussions. Following the seminar, one of the authors had the opportunity to support two faculty participants through a new state-funded grant program, which was available through the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund. One grant was awarded to support the development of OER materials for two courses in mathematics and data science. The author supported the application process and provided feedback on common considerations in the process of creating and publishing OER. The second was a grant to purchase library-licensed materials to support first-year seminar students. The second grant was utilized by multiple instructors across disciplines to help familiarize first-year students with the University's mission. While this was a limited time opportunity for funded collaboration, these examples also can encourage others to seek library support in the grant application and implementation process, particularly as it relates to their demonstrated expertise, providing opportunities for librarians to grow and develop their own professional skills.

**Conclusion**

The FLC framework offered the authors an opportunity to adopt a collaborative outreach approach to supplement an already robust open

advocacy agenda within their Library. FLCs also provide some unique affordances compared to other types of open programming and initiatives. Unlike one-shot presentations or grant-based partnerships with faculty, an FLC provides the time, structure, and forum for librarians and teaching faculty to collaboratively learn and expand their expertise together over the course of an academic year. The regularity and exploratory nature of the seminar discussions invited relationship building among the librarians and disciplinary faculty, and these conversations helped identify future partnerships.

The authors argue that the FLC case study presented in this article offers a pathway for librarians to engage in outreach and advocacy, while also supporting professional development for librarians who continue to expand their core responsibilities to include new areas of expertise. Specifically, this article hopes to spark ideas for librarians around effective ways to advocate for the adoption of open practices and resources through interdisciplinary learning communities. The authors offer the FLC model as evidence for how a learning community can strengthen relationships between faculty and librarians, set the groundwork for continued collaboration, and encourage a shift from theory to practice for the implementation of open practices on campus.

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Riddle, "Navigating OER: The Library's Role in Bringing OER to Campus," *The Serials Librarian* 70, no. 1–4 (2016): 128–34, https://doi.org/10.1080/0361526X.2016.1153326; Daniel Stafford, "Promoting Open Educational Resources: A Beginner's Playbook," *Pennsylvania Libraries: Research & Practice* 8, no. 2 (2020): 103–14, https://doi.org/10.5195/palrap.2020.233.

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Jhangiani, "Investigating the Perceptions, Use, and Impact of Open Textbooks: A Survey of Post-Secondary Students in British Columbia," *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning* 18, no. 4 (2017): 172–92, https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v18i4.3012.

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https://jl4d.org/index.php/ejl4d/article/view/290.

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[11] Robin Champieux, Camille Thomas, and Ali Versluis, "Using Outreach Weeks to Examine Labor, Assessment and Value in Open Advocacy," *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication* 8, no. 1 (2020): 8–9, https://doi.org/10.7710/2162-3309.2371.

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[15] Jennifer W. Bazeley, Jen Waller, and Eric Resnis, "Engaging Faculty in Scholarly Communication Change: A Learning Community Approach." *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication* 2, no. 3 (2014): eP1129, https://doi.org/10.7710/2162-3309.1129.

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[18] Ibid., 29.

[19] Theresa Burress, Emily Mann, and Tina Neville, "Exploring Data Literacy via a Librarian-Faculty Learning Community: A Case Study," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 46, no. 1

(January 2020): 102076, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2019.102076.

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[21] Ibid., 5.

[22] Etienne Wenger-Trayner and Beverly Wenger-Trayner, "Introduction to Communities of Practice: A Brief Overview of the Concept and its Uses," June 2015, https://wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/.

[23] Caroline Sinkinson and Amanda McAndrew, "Approaching Open Pedagogy in Community and Collaboration," in *Open Pedagogy Approaches: Faculty, Library, and Student Collaborations*, ed. Kimberly Davies Hoffman and Alexis Clifton (Geneseo Authors, 2020), 42–56, https://knightscholar.geneseo.edu/geneseo-authors/11/.

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[34] J. Jacob Jenkins et al., "Textbook Broke: Textbook Affordability as a Social Justice Issue," *Journal of Interactive Media in Education* 2020, no. 1 (2020): 3, https://doi.org/10.5334/jime.549.

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[39] Ibid., 111.

[40] Bazeley, Waller, and Resnis, "Engaging Faculty in Scholarly Communication Change," 7.

[41] Sinkinson and McAndrew, "Approaching Open Pedagogy in Community and Collaboration," 50.

[42] Bazeley, Waller, and Resnis, "Engaging Faculty in Scholarly Communication Change," 8.

[43] Roberts, "Where Are All the Faculty in the Open Educational Movement?;" Fabio Nascimbeni and Daniel Burgos, "In Search for the Open Educator: Proposal of a Definition and a Framework to Increase Openness Adoption Among University Educators," *The International Review*

*of Research in Open and Distributed Learning* 17, no. 6 (December 2016): 1-17, https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v17i6.2736.

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45 Seaman and Seaman, "Digital Texts in the Time of COVID," 44.

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47 Roberts, "Where Are All the Faculty in the Open Educational Movement?;" Skidmore and Provida, "A Place for Policy;" Smith and Lee, "Librarians and OER;" Nascimbeni and Burgos, "In Search for the Open Educator."

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## Appendix A

*Open Revolution* Grant Proposal – AY 2020-2021

**Overview**

While knowledge was previously seen as protected and kept within the "ivory towers" of academia, the nature of scholarship and research is changing due to the rise of sharing platforms and cultural attitudes shifting towards universal access. The word "open" is generally associated with something easily accessible and not restricted to any one group of people. Open is the adjective attached to many educational or research concepts, with the rise of open educational resources, open data, open access, open pedagogy, open peer-review, and more. Open educational resources (OER) allow students to access course materials freely and immediately, contributing to an accessible academic environment. OERs, however, can also be accessed by anyone looking for knowledge. Open data can be analyzed by a variety of researchers who can find nuanced patterns or draw innovative conclusions. Open access allows for research to reach beyond paywalls and be shared, expanded upon, and examined by diverse groups of scholars as well as any interested party. Open is utilized in technology though open-source software, which can be downloaded and adapted for a variety of purposes, and the medical sciences through genome projects and crowdsourcing medical information, which could lead to breakthroughs and diagnoses. Social media can also be used to disseminate information openly, with professionals utilizing streaming platforms to educate and promote knowledge, best practices, and advice.

This Clavius will address the questions posed by the availability of this knowledge and the role of academia in a world where answers are a click away. The idea of openness can lead to a diversity of perspectives, experiences, and narratives being shared across traditional boundaries. At the same time, the openness of information can lead to the dissemination of bad information; the internet is now an environment in which links are easily distributed, images easily distorted, and terms like "fake news" can take on a new meaning depending on who is speaking. This Clavius will discuss the benefits of openness, but also examine potential consequences of the ability to share so widely and on such a large scale.

**Statement of Goals**

- Strengthen cross-disciplinary and inter-departmental collaborations in scholarship, teaching and learning.

We plan to distribute the seminar invitation to all faculty and staff who are interested in participating in the seminar; the first twenty to respond will be included in the seminar.

- Promote the integration or incorporation of diverse intellectual, social and cultural perspectives into curricula

By stepping outside the traditional bounds of academia, the Clavius sessions will introduce attendees to the breadth of open scholarship, data, and resources available. The Clavius will also promote the practice of utilizing a variety of sources in the classroom, now available more than ever through digital platforms and enriching the curricula through their variety of perspectives.

- Foster the development of integrative models of knowledge

The idea of open transcends all disciplines and facilitates an environment in which individuals from a variety of backgrounds, interests, and experiences can meaningfully contribute to a body of knowledge and benefit from the collective knowledge. This Clavius will examine a variety of "open" projects, which individuals can critique from their own knowledge and formulate ideas of how different disciplines can come together to create and sustain a primarily online environment of sharing and collaboration.

- Facilitate the development of student learning outcomes regarding integrative learning and in assessing integrative teaching approaches.

The Clavius will frequently revisit throughout discussions how open is already affecting students and their learning environments, especially as student populations are now considered "digital natives." This will lead to discussions on how attendees can leverage the openness of knowledge to benefit the students and turn them into lifelong learners.

**Structure**

We propose a monthly seminar that will run for a total of 8 meetings across the 2020-2021 academic year. Each meeting will focus on an aspect of "open," with participants volunteering to facilitate sessions and contribute readings pertaining to a particular area of interest or expertise.

To align with the concept of open introduced by the seminar, the scholarship selected for this seminar will be open access or freely available. If any resources are identified by participants, however, and need copyright clearance we will use Clavius funds to pay for these costs. Funds also may be used to bring a guest speaker to discuss the open movement and how it is affecting academia. Remaining Clavius funds will be utilized to purchase light refreshments for the meetings.

**Possible materials**

- Greshake Tzovaras, Bastian, Misha Angrist, Kevin Arvai, Mairi Dulaney, Vero Estrada-Galiñanes, Beau Gunderson, Tim Head, et al. 2019. "Open Humans: A Platform for Participant-Centered Research and Personal Data Exploration." *GigaScience* 8, no. 6 (June). https://doi.org/10.1093/gigascience/giz076.
- McKiernan, Eric C., Philip E. Bourne, C. Titus Brown, Stuart Buck, Amye Kenall, Jennifer Lin, Damon McDougall, et al. 2016. "How Open Science Helps Researchers Succeed." *eLife* 2016, no. 5. https://doi.org/10.7554/eLife.16800.
- Ozdemir, Ozgur, and Christina Hendricks. 2017. "Instructor and Student Experiences with Open Textbooks, from the California Open Online Library for Education (Cool4Ed)." *Journal of Computing in Higher Education* 29, no. 1: 98–113. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12528-017-9138-0.
- Shen, Cenyu, and Bo-Christer Björk. 2015. "'Predatory' Open Access: A Longitudinal Study of Article Volumes and Market Characteristics." *BMC Medicine* 13, no. 230. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-015-0469-2.

## Appendix B

*Open Revolution* Seminar Reading List – Academic Year 2020-2021

### October – Intro to Open and Open Pedagogy

Dean, Miranda. 2018. "What an Open Pedagogy Class Taught Me About Myself." In *Interdisciplinary Studies: A Connected Learning Approach* edited by Robin DeRosa, Chapter 9. Rebus Press. https://press.rebus.community/idsconnect/chapter/what-an-open-pedagogy-class-taught-me-about-myself/.

Paskevicius, Michael, and Valerie Irvine. 2019. "Practicalities of Implementing Open Pedagogy in Higher Education." *Smart Learning Environments* 6, no. 23. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-019-0110-5.

Weller, Martin. 2014. "The Victory of Openness." In *The Battle for Open: How Openness Won and Why It Doesn't Feel Like Victory* by Martin Weller, 1–26. Ubiquity Press. https://doi.org/10.5334/bam.

### November – Open Pedagogy

DeRosa, Robin. 2016. "My Open Textbook: Pedagogy and Practice." *Division of Teaching and Learning Technologies Blog*, June 24, 2016. http://umwdtlt.com/open-textbook-pedagogy-practice/.

### March – Barriers to Openness

Andersen, Maria. 2010. "To Share or Not to Share: Is That the Question?" *EDUCAUSE Review* 45, no. 4 (July/August): 40–49. https://er.educause.edu/articles/2010/8/to-share-or-not-to-share-is-that-the-question.

Mishra, Sanjaya. 2017. "Open Educational Resources: Removing Barriers from Within." *Distance Education* 38, no. 3: 369–380. https://doi.org/10.1080/01587919.2017.1369350.

### April – Open Access Publishing

Elsevier. 2021. "University of California and Elsevier Sign Ground-Breaking Transformative Agreement." Elsevier Corporate Press Releases. Last modified March 16, 2021. https://www.elsevier.com/about/press-releases/corporate/university-of-california-and-elsevier-sign-ground-breaking-transformative-agreement.

Fitzgerald, Sarah Rose, and Zhehan Jiang. 2020. "Scholarly Publishing at a Crossroads: Scholarly Perspectives on Open Access." *Innovative Higher Education* 45, no. 6: 457–469. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10755-020-09508-8.

Raman, T.R. Shankar. 2021. "Why I Won't Review or Write for Elsevier and Other Commercial Scientific Journals." *The Wire*, April 4, 2021. https://science.thewire.in/the-sciences/why-i-wont-review-or-write-for-elsevier-and-other-commercial-scientific-journals/.

### May – Open Educational Resources

Kılıçkaya, Ferit, and Joanna Kic-Drgas. 2021. "Issues of Context and Design in OER (Open Educational Resources)." *Educational Technology Research and Development* 69: 401–405. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-020-09852-8.

MIT OpenCourseWare. n.d. "Homepage." Accessed May 1, 2021. https://ocw.mit.edu/.

Open Course Library. n.d. "Courses and Materials." Accessed May 1, 2021. http://opencourselibrary.org/course/.

Open Textbook Library. n.d. "Homepage." Accessed May 1, 2021. https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks.