



Zero to Sixty in Five Years: University of Arkansas-Cossatot A Journey to Success with OER & A Pathway to Funding

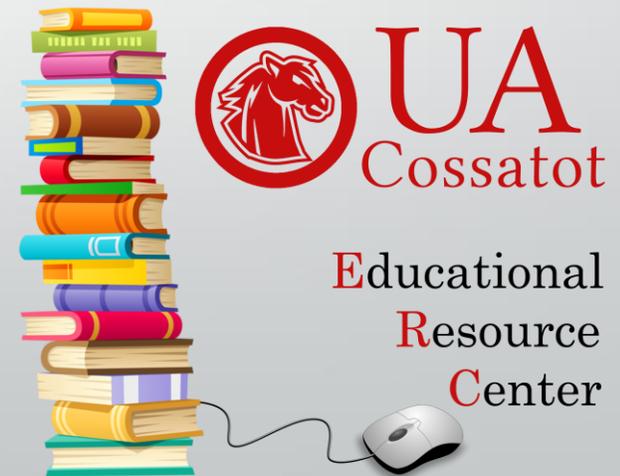
Presented by Relinda Ruth, Director of Educational Resources & OER Specialist, UA Cossatot

The University of Arkansas Cossatot is an HLC-accredited two-year institution that includes four campuses and is a part of the University of Arkansas System. UA Cossatot offers associate degrees and certifications to about 1,500 students per semester. As a small community college in southwest Arkansas, UA Cossatot is known for taking innovative approaches to higher education.



In 2013, UA Cossatot transitioned its library, Kimball Library, into a media-rich and user-friendly Educational Resource Center (ERC)

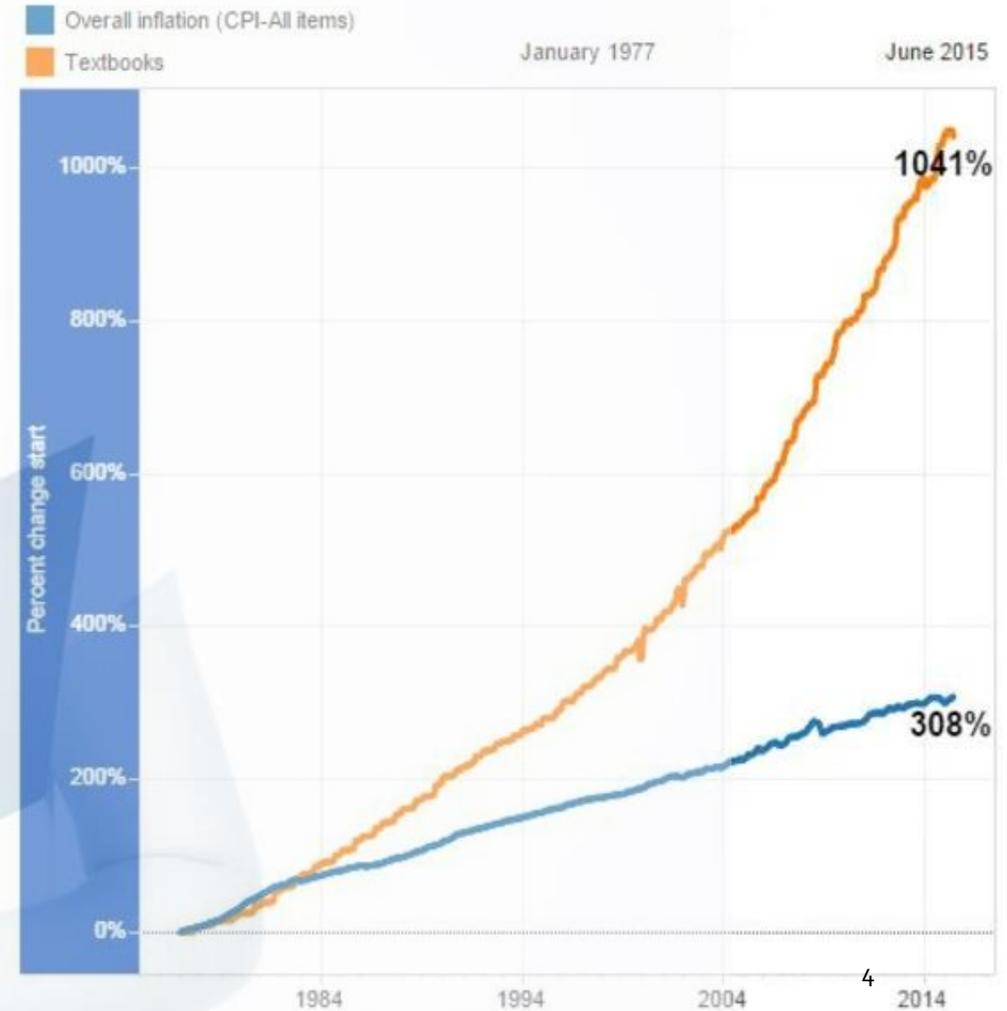
By combining the college's library and tutoring center, student usage of academic resources increased 600%





Pricey textbooks

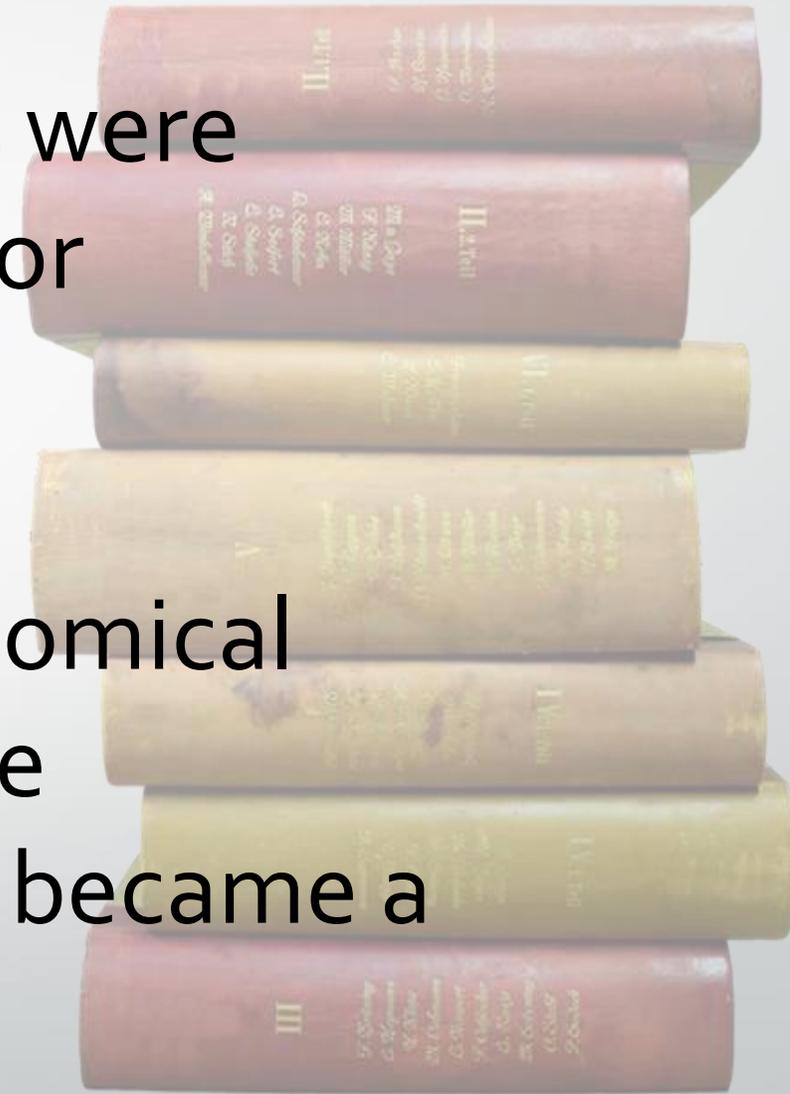
Since 1977, textbook prices have risen at more than triple the overall rate of U.S. inflation. Use the filter to choose a date range to track textbook price inflation. (SOURCE: BLS)

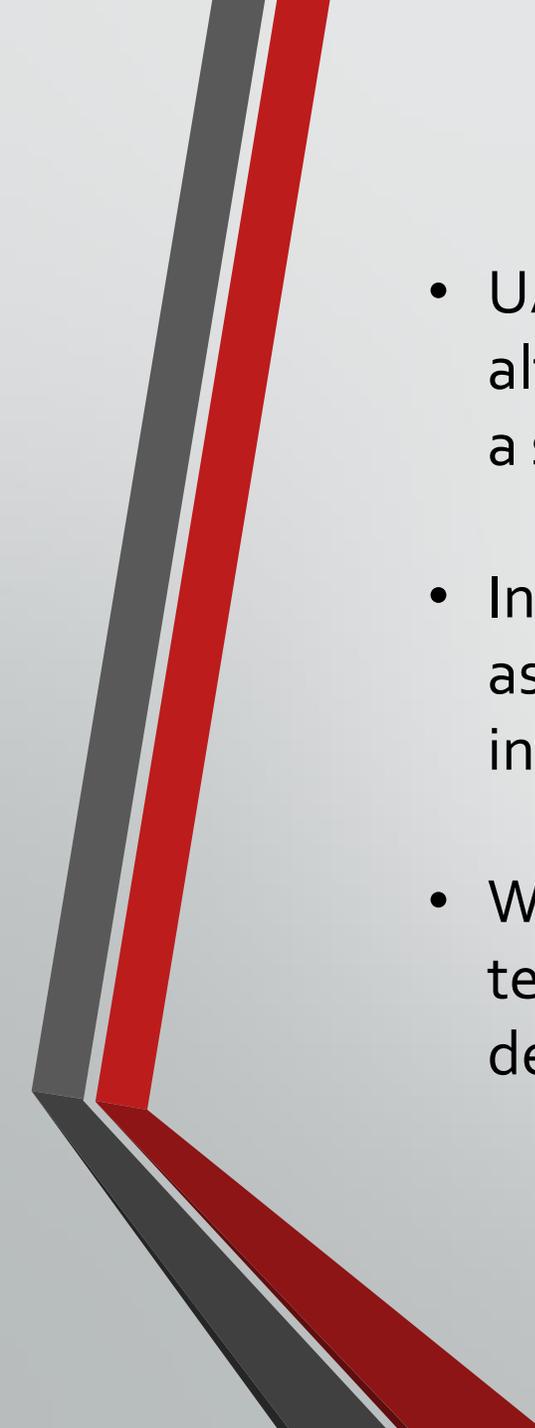


Textbook prices have risen higher than overall inflation for the past three decades. NBC News



- In 2014, UA Cossatot students were paying up to \$1,400 per year for textbooks
- Finding a way to provide economical alternatives to textbooks while maintaining academic quality became a primary administrative focus



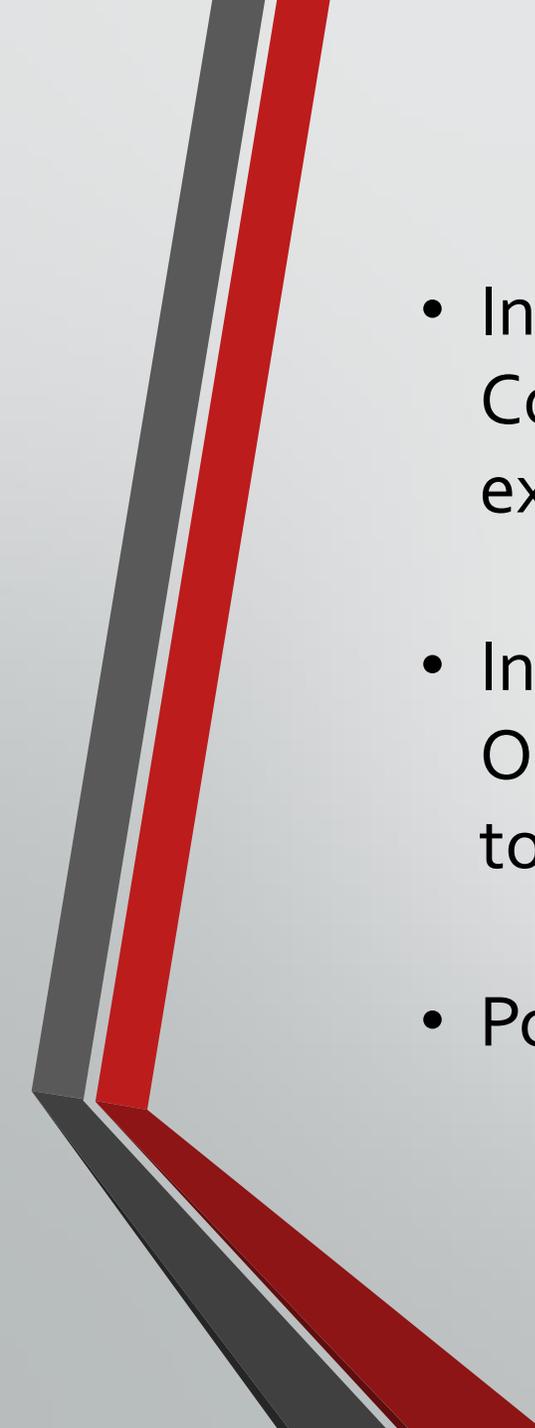
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- UA Cossatot Chancellor Steve Cole encouraged faculty to find alternative sources to costly textbooks and revise course designs as a strategy to eliminate financial barriers for students
 - In Early 2015, when the college's bookstore lease was due, Dr. Cole asked the Director of Educational Resources if she could develop an internal textbook rental program
 - With college administration's full support, a plan to procure and rent textbooks to students for a maximum fee of \$30 per semester was developed

- Faculty were encouraged to use open resources instead of traditional textbooks
- A \$500 stipend was established for faculty willing to design courses using OER
- The director of educational resources spent summer 2015 procuring textbooks and developing a process for distributing rentals to students
- Initially, it was suggested that faculty manage the textbook inventory; however, ERC staff stepped up to move beyond the role of only procurement to handling the textbook program entirely



- During the first year of the new Textbook Rental & OER program, instructors for **38** courses selected OER for their courses with stipends totaling \$19,000
- After three semesters, UA Cossatot was 35% OER
- In addition to becoming the first two-year college in Arkansas to use an internal textbook rental program, UA Cossatot was also leading the state in OER usage



- 
- Initial course reviews were conducted by the Curriculum Committee; however, we needed someone with more experience and training with OER
 - In fall 2016, the chancellor appointed faculty members to an OER Board to review OER courses for efficacy and adherence to Creative Commons standards
 - Policies and procedures were developed for OER guidelines

STUDENT COMMENTS



Madison Woodruff

4 hrs · Ashdown, AR · 🌐

I would like to personally take the time out of my day to give a HUGE shout out and a great BIG thank you to each and every person who had any hand in the new book program at UA Cossatot! I went in to get my book for class to find that I won't have one this semester. Although the program isn't "free" and you get charged in your tuition and fee's, the sweet lady at the ERC informed me my professor will have all of the information I will need and links to articles on the first day of class- I got out completely free!!! My only hope is that this influences other colleges to follow in our footsteps to help all students across the state! This new books system is going to be a blessing to each student here at UA Cossatot and I cannot be more blessed to say I am a student here and plan on being here as long as I can! So thank you UAC!!! Can't wait for another awesome year!!! #kickemcolts #uac

"I enjoy the OER program here at Cossatot because I can receive the proper education that I need without having to pay an outrageous amount of money. I love that UA Cossatot offers book rentals because I am able to have a stable access to the textbooks I need and return them when I no longer need them. It is a great way to save money while still achieving my educational goals."

~UA Cossatot student Montie Hennard



STUDENT SAVINGS

2015-16

• \$360,053.54

2016-17

• \$338,830.37

44% OER

\$699,000 IN STUDENT SAVINGS
DURING THE FIRST TWO YEARS

- The 2016 chancellor-appointed OER Board members were still reviewing OER courses in 2018, but it became clear that someone needed training specifically in Creative Commons and open resources in order to help faculty
- During spring 2018, I submitted a proposal listing the reasons we should join the Open Textbook Network to become better informed in all things OER



**Open Textbook
Library**



“UA Cossatot’s Textbook/ OER initiative has revealed the need for further training and access to OER grants to improve current practices at the institution. While several instructors were initially eager to adopt open resources as a method in which to reduce student expenses, much of the faculty remains hesitant due to a lack of training available. Faculty seem hesitant for the following primary reasons: lack of time necessary to develop open courses; lack of understanding regarding copyright laws; lack of course design; lack of networking opportunities to develop OER use; and several misconceptions about OER” (Ruth, 2018).

AUGUST 2018



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 28 AUGUST 2018
CONTACT: RELINDA RUTH, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES & OER SPECIALIST

UA Cossatot First in Arkansas to Join Open Textbook Network

DE QUEEN, AR — The University of Arkansas Cossatot is now the first college in Arkansas to become a member of the Open Textbook Network (OTN). OTN membership supports UA Cossatot's innovative open educational resource (OER) and internal textbook rental program. In the past three years, those programs have saved UAC students just under \$1.1 million dollars in textbook costs.



Cossatot Community College,
University Of Arkansas

“Membership in the OEN solidifies our goal of reducing the expense of educational resources for students while maintaining high academic quality and increasing faculty participation in a learning environment that encourages innovative global sharing of knowledge.”

The next step was to ensure that someone had training in Creative Commons



Joining the OEN (formerly OTN) was one of the best moves for OER growth. Serving on the Steering Committee was an honor.

RUTH SELECTED TO SERVE ON OTN STEERING COMMITTEE

🕒 April 1, 2019 📁 Local News 👁 148 Views

UA Cossatot Director of Educational Resources and OER Specialist Relinda Ruth of Dierks was recently selected to serve on the Open Textbook Network (OTN) Steering Committee for a two-year term. "This is a great honor," Ruth said. "I am excited to work with dedicated individuals who are devoted to making higher education more accessible through the use of open textbooks."



Open Education Network

**Open Textbook
Network at
University of
Arkansas
Cossatot with...**

March 15, 2019



**Open Textbook
Network**



**JASMINE
ROBERTS**

**Strategic Communication
Lecturer**

The Ohio State University



**MICHELLE
REED**

Open Education Librarian

University of Texas - Arlington

In the meantime . . .

STUDENT SAVINGS

2017-18

• \$323,187.71

2018-19

• \$354,397.43

54% OER

\$1,376,469 IN STUDENT SAVINGS
2016-2019



LEARN OER

FIND OER

OER STORIES

Module 1: Introduction

Greetings!

Welcome to *How to use Open Educational Resources*, a self-paced workshop.

So, what is this course all about?

This course walks you through techniques to incorporate Open Educational Resources (OER) into your teaching practice. The course will cover the fundamental aspects of OER including open licensing and public domain. It focuses on providing practical guidance in locating and applying openly available resources. It is expected that upon completion of this course participants will be able to

Module 1: Introduction

Module 2: Copyright & License

Module 3: Understanding OER

Module 4: Open License

Module 5: Creative Commons Licenses

Module 6: Finding OER

Module 7: Public Domain

Module 8: Sharing OER

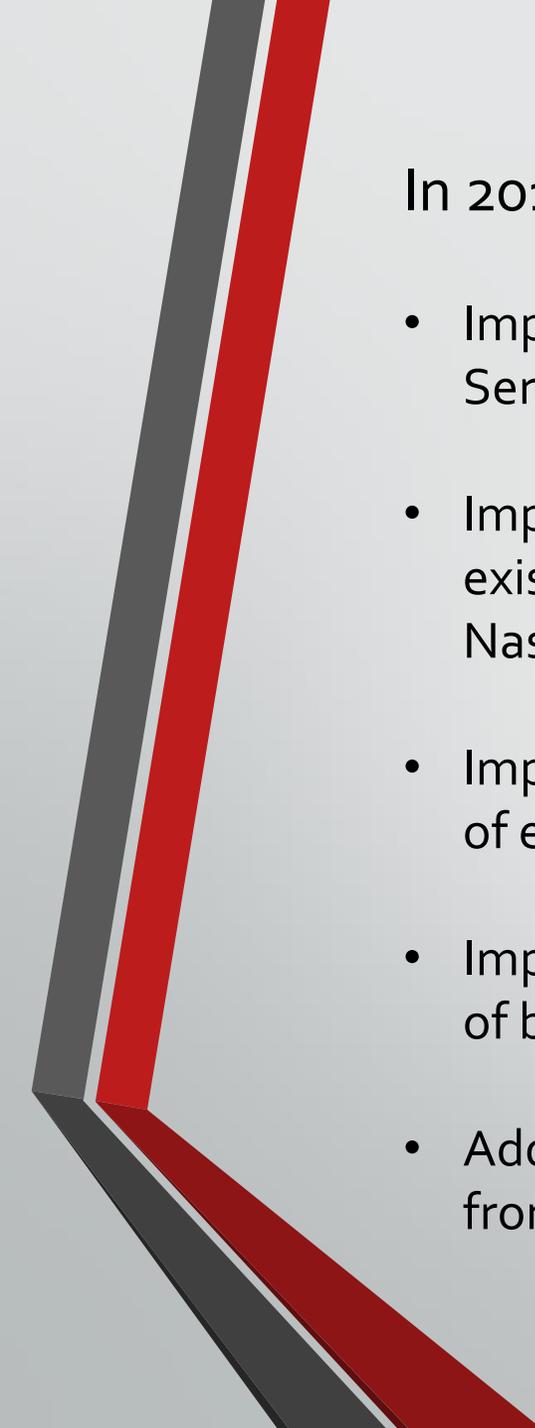
Module 9: Accessibility

Module 10: Why OER Matters

Recognizing that our OER initiative had saved students almost \$1.5 million to this point, but that our state is limited for OER grant opportunities, we knew that we had to find a way to get funding for OER . . .

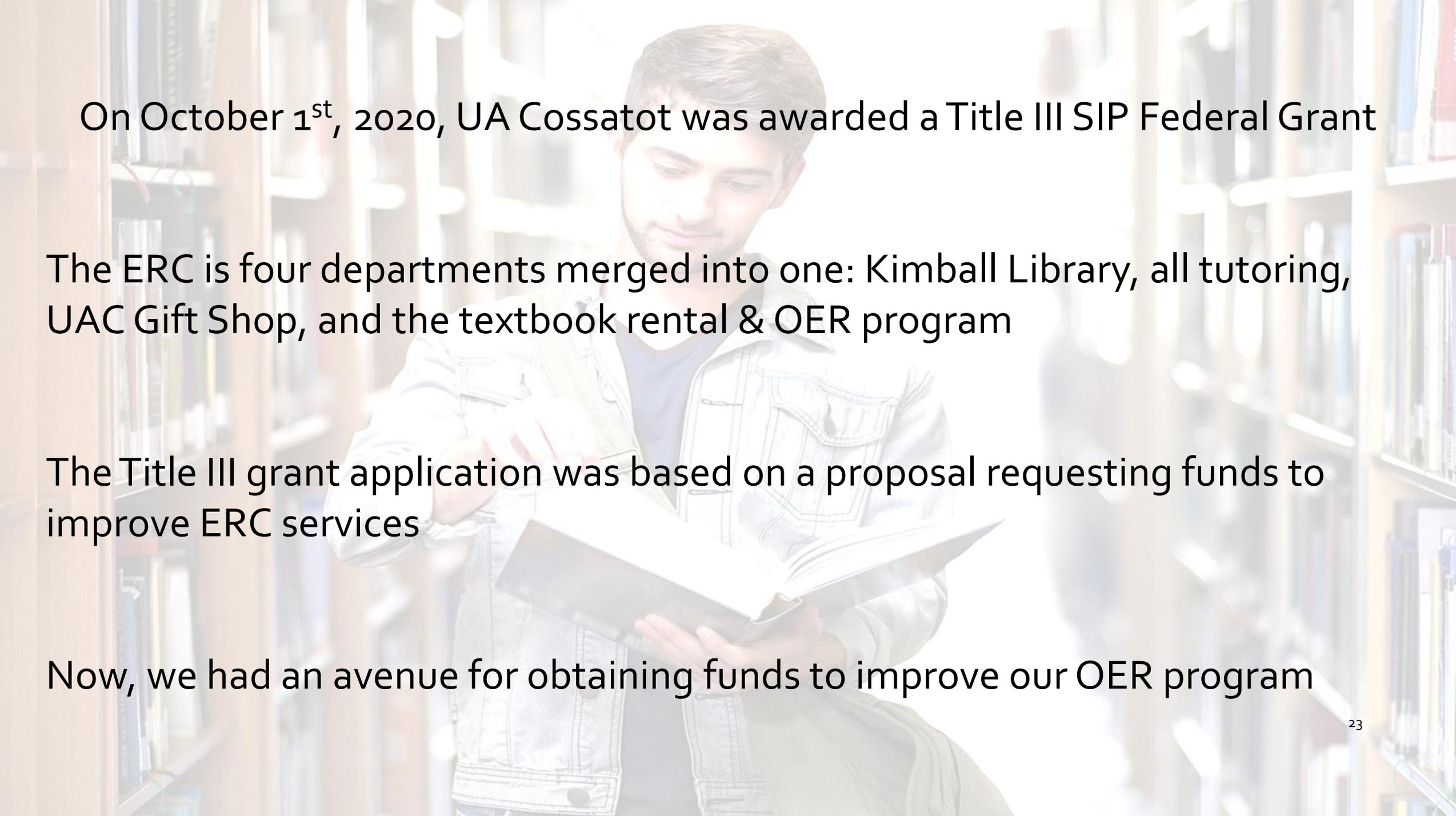
Enter a \$2.2 million Title III Strengthening Institutions Program Grant . . .





In 2019, UA Cossatot submitted a Title III SIP grant with five primary goals:

- Improve job placement rates for graduates by establishing a UA Cossatot Career Services Office
- Improve retention and graduation rates by expanding the services and facilities of the existing UA Cossatot Educational Resource Center (ERC) at the campuses in De Queen, Nashville, and Ashdown
- Improve the rate at which students in the medical education programs achieve mastery of essential skills
- Improve the soft skills of graduates in order to align their employability with the needs of business and industry
- Add \$150,000 to the college endowment to match the proposed \$150,000 received from the Title III Strengthening Institutions Program grant.

A young man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a light blue denim jacket over a dark blue t-shirt, is standing in a library. He is holding an open book and looking down at it. The background shows wooden bookshelves filled with books, slightly out of focus. The lighting is bright and even.

On October 1st, 2020, UA Cossatot was awarded a Title III SIP Federal Grant

The ERC is four departments merged into one: Kimball Library, all tutoring, UAC Gift Shop, and the textbook rental & OER program

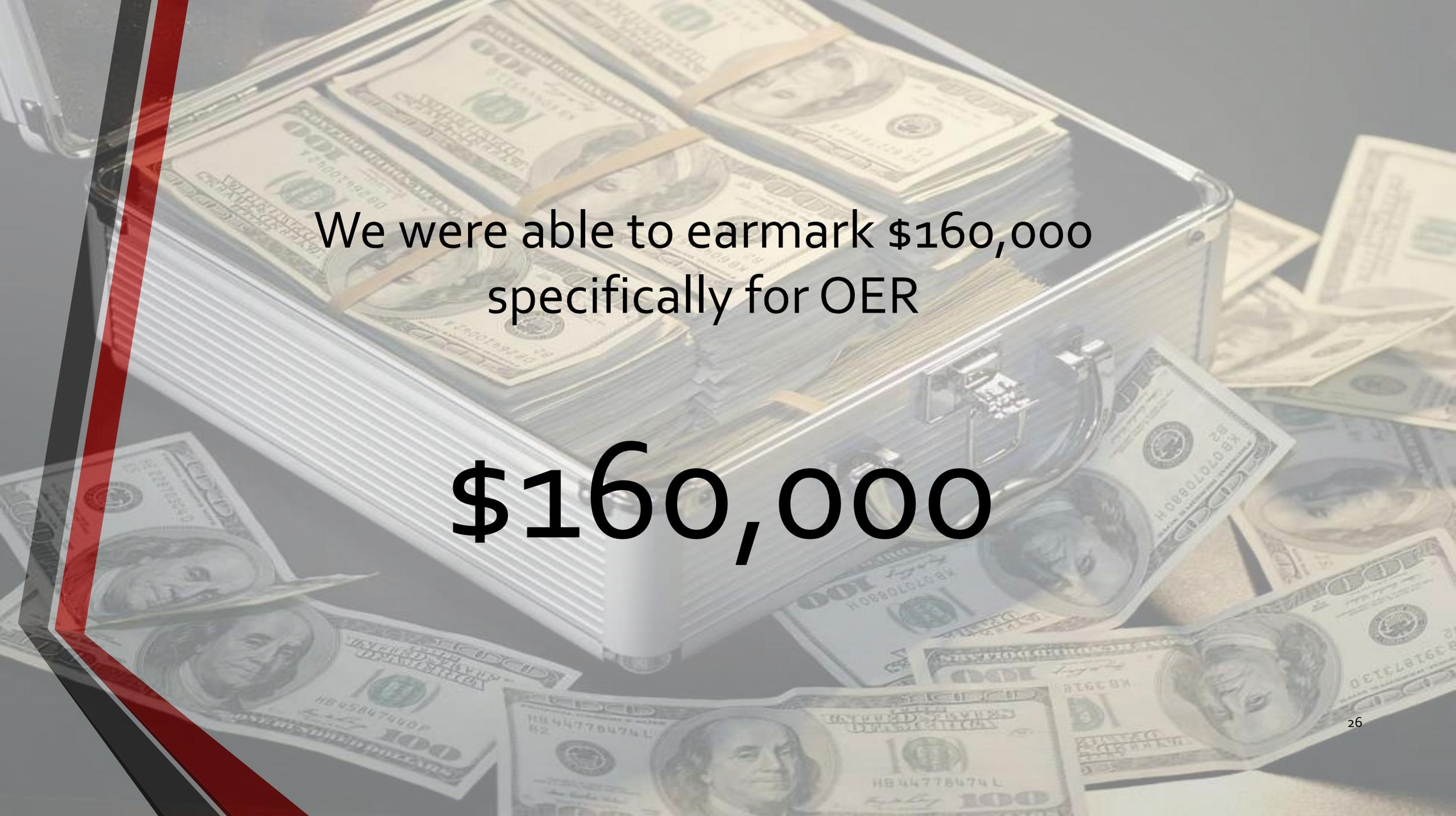
The Title III grant application was based on a proposal requesting funds to improve ERC services

Now, we had an avenue for obtaining funds to improve our OER program

- Objective 2.7 By the end of Year Five, the use of open-source materials in UA Cossatot's courses will increase 4% per year.
- Budget for increasing faculty stipends & training



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- Grant dollars for OER development, which will provide effective training and a substantial incentive to encourage faculty to adopt OER
 - The OER specialist will attend various conferences and participate in training opportunities, acquiring the knowledge to train faculty more efficiently, eventually making UA Cossatot a 100% OER institution, as well as benefiting educational institutions statewide by sharing information
 - As OER gains momentum, UA Cossatot will host annual conferences and workshops encouraging initiatives for OER
 - The OER specialist will provide OER training for educators in Arkansas and neighboring states



We were able to earmark \$160,000
specifically for OER

\$160,000

In the meantime . . .

STUDENT SAVINGS

2019-20

• **\$428,698.17**

2020-21

• **\$433,793.85**

65% OER

\$2,238,961.07 IN STUDENT
SAVINGS 2016-2021

And now . . .

STUDENT SAVINGS

FALL 2021

● **\$244,602.00**

65% OER

\$2,483,563.07 IN STUDENT SAVINGS

2015-2021



OER ROCKS!

UA Cossatot's OER Program Saves Students Nearly 2.5 Million Since 2015

October 25, 2021

UA Cossatot's Open Educational Resource (OER) program has saved students of the college nearly 2.5 million in textbook rental fees. Since 2015, the program has saved students \$2,238,961.07.

"We began our innovative internal textbook rental and OER program with a primary goal of removing the financial barrier expensive textbooks posed to our students and it's clear that we've accomplished that goal. In six short years, we've saved our students millions of dollars in textbook expenses and we continue to lead Arkansas in OER usage among two-year colleges," said OER Specialist and Director of Educational Resources Relinda Ruth.

UA Cossatot students have saved \$433,793.85 for the three semesters of 2020-21. In addition, UA Cossatot's OER adoption has grown significantly. At the end of the 2015-16 academic year, UA Cossatot was 35% OER. Currently, the college is at 65%.

Encouraging OER

- Get the word out
- Create positions for OER specialists
- Introduce librarians to OER (include K-12)
- Show faculty that they have **more academic freedom with OER**

ERC established
Student use of
academic resources
increases 600%

2013



2015



2016



35% OER
Student savings
savings=\$360,053
OER Board formed

Internal Textbook
Rental & OER
Program launched

44% OER
Student savings=\$338,830

2017



2018



2019



First institution in Arkansas to have an OER Specialist certified for specialization in open licensing and the Commons through Creative Commons

OER Specialist selected to serve on the OTN Steering Committee

Arkansas Dept. of Higher Education Improving Efficiencies Award

Join the Open Textbook Network

54% OER

Student savings=\$323,987

Awarded Title III SIP
Grant

Student
Savings=\$428,698
64% OER

2020



2021

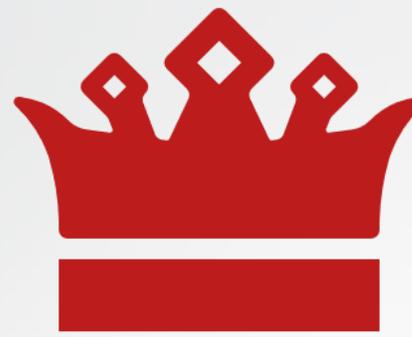


FALL 2021

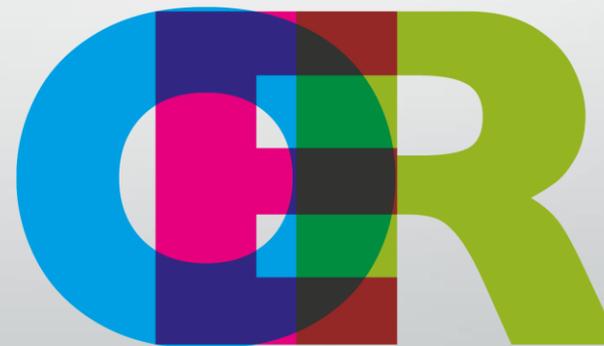


Student Savings=\$244,602
65% OER
Total Savings 2015-
2021=\$2,483,563

Student
savings=\$433,793
65% OER

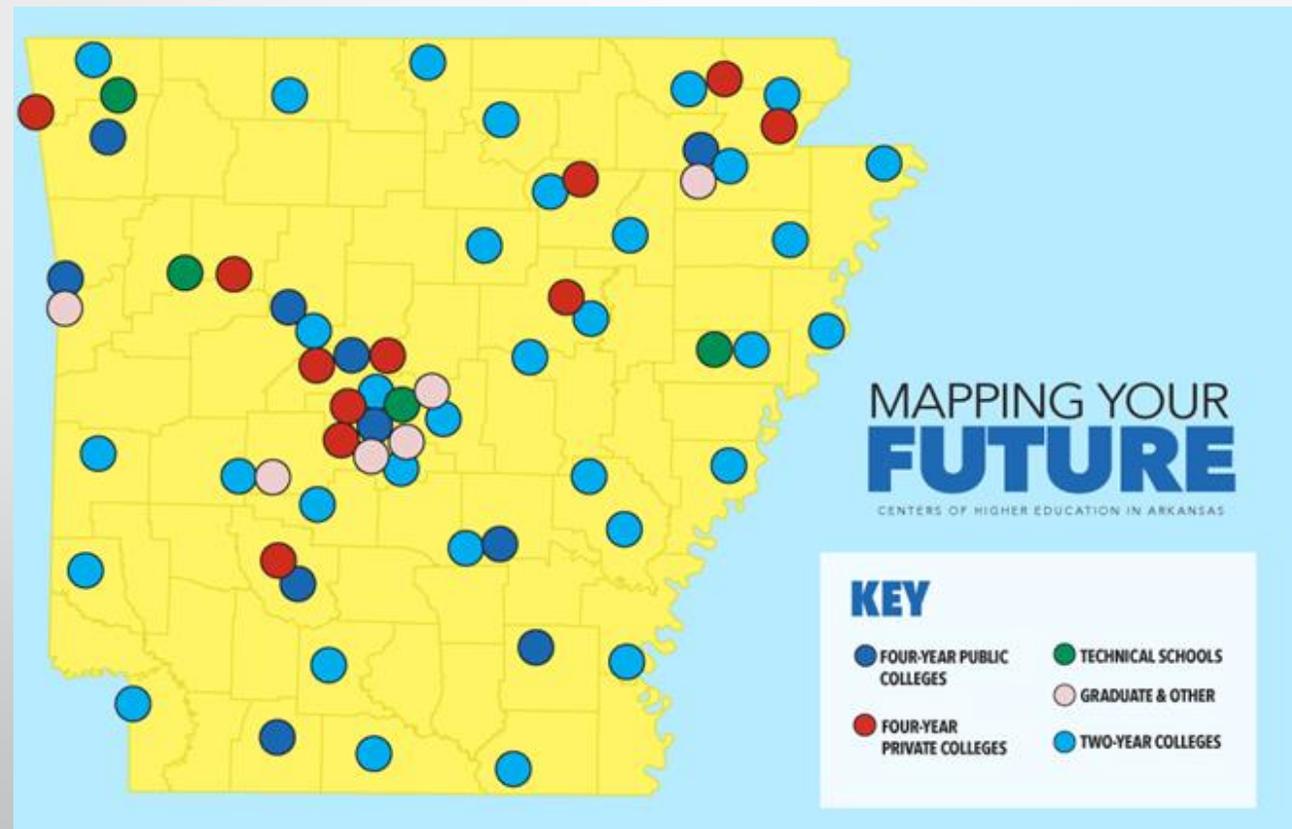


DON'T KEEP
CALM
GET EXCITED...



OPEN EDUCATIONAL
RESOURCES

BIG CHANGES ARE COMING TO ARKANSAS!



“Education shall be free . . . technical and professional education shall be made . . . available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all . . .”



(UN General Assembly, 1948)



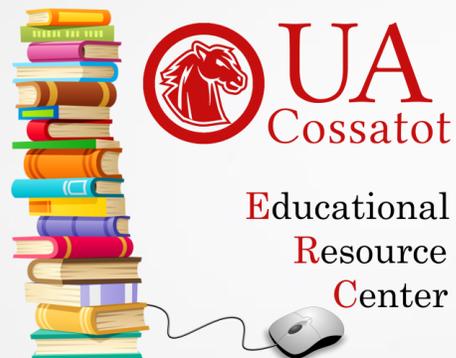
The primary purpose of OER is to share knowledge

Everyone should have access to adequate education

In addition to encouraging global sharing
of knowledge, OER ensures that

*“higher education shall be equally
accessible to all . . .”*

Thank you for your time & attention!



Questions?

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