2018 Affordable Course Content Awards

More info and applications: go.vcu.edu/textbooksavings

VCU Libraries, the Office of the Provost, the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence and the ALT Lab are partnering for a second round of awards to support faculty adoption and creation of free or low cost alternatives to expensive textbooks. Academic Technologies, Online @ VCU, Student Accessibility and Educational Opportunity, and the VCU Bookstore have also committed to serve as resources for award recipients.

$20,000 total for the award program is anticipated with maximum funding of $6,000 for any individual project. Awards will be for FY19, with a possibility for releasing partial funds in FY18. Funds will be dispersed via interdepartmental transfer. Potential use of funds could include course release time, equipment, hired design or editorial assistance.

Completed application forms are due April 16, 2018. The award committee will notify applicants by of award decisions by April 30, 2018. Project timelines may vary but must be completed by June 1, 2019, with implementation expected Fall 2019 at the latest.

Questions? Contact Hillary Miller at hmillr5@vcu.edu or (804) 827-0462

Types of awards

Adopt Award
Redesign your course to incorporate low-cost or free educational resources. $1000 per person, capped at $3,000 per course. Special consideration may be given to larger departmental projects or projects involving high-enrollment courses.

Author Award
Create a substantially new openly licensed textbook or course content where it is possible to demonstrate that quality resources are not currently available to meet learning objectives. $2,000 per person with a project cap of $6,000 per course.

Timeline
- April 16, 2018 Application Deadline
- April 30, 2018 Awards announced
Eligibility

All faculty, including tenure, term, and adjunct, are eligible for awards. Awards can be given to individual faculty or faculty groups. Only one application per faculty member or faculty group will be considered.

Requirements for applicants

- Clearly state the needs that will be addressed. Considerations include total student savings created, potential impact on student success, and other relevant elements.
- Identify the resources that you will use or demonstrate that existing resources are not available to meet your objectives. Places to start include the Open Textbook Library, BCcampus, OER Commons, and Open Oregon’s Resources page. (For help, contact Hillary Miller, Scholarly Communications Outreach Librarian, hmiller5@vcu.edu)
- Identify the support that may be needed for your project, such as librarians, accessibility services, technical support for online options, bookstore for print options, copy editors, peer reviewers, illustrators, etc.
- If applying for an author award, agree to openly license your work with a CC BY or CC BY-NC Creative Commons license so that others can easily adopt and reuse. (For questions about Creative Commons licenses, contact Hillary Miller at hmiller5@vcu.edu.)
- Attend the opening workshop (summer 2018) and provide updates throughout the year.
- Participate in ongoing conversations about your project and offer advice to colleagues.
- Agree to publicize your work with the VCU Affordable Course Content Awards program.
- Barring unforeseen complications, awardees will be expected to implement their projects for at least two semesters and assess the impact of their project during or after the first semester of implementation.

Application evaluation criteria

1. Student savings compared to award amount
2. Quality considerations such as accessibility of proposed content, support for user experience and curriculum, appeal for future adoption in other settings, and demonstrated need to create new content rather than reuse existing content (if applicable)
3. Department commitment (for example, a redesign of all sections of a class or all classes in a sequence)
4. Feasibility of project as proposed

Award evaluation committee

- Jimmy Ghaphery, Associate University Librarian for Scholarly Communications and Publishing, VCU Libraries
- Enoch Hale, Director, Teaching & Learning Excellence
- Hillary Miller, Scholarly Communications Outreach Librarian, VCU Libraries
- Tom Woodward, Associate Director of Learning Innovation, ALT Lab
- Faculty member

Apply for an award ➔

About affordable course content

The Need

- Textbook costs place students in academic risk if they must delay or simply not purchase required textbooks. (Florida Virtual Campus, 2016)
- The high cost of educational materials restricts faculty choice around supplementary course materials targeted at addressing high Drop-fail-withdraw (DFW) rates.
- Average VCU student loan debt is $32,411, highest student loan debt upon graduation among large, public universities in Virginia. (Institute for College Access and Success, 2016)
- College textbook prices have increased faster than almost any other consumer good. (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016)

Barriers to adopting free or low cost textbooks (2016 national survey)

- Faculty find that “there are not enough resources for my subject” (49%), it is “too hard to find what I need” (48%) and “there is no comprehensive catalog of resources” (45%).
- Most faculty do not have experience searching for Open Educational Resources (OER) and cannot compare the ease of finding OER with traditional materials.
- Faculty frequently report a lack of time to search for, evaluate, edit, or create OER on their own.
- Faculty may require support for instructional design and curriculum alignment when using OER. (Babson Research Group, 2016)
References

- Association of Research Libraries. (2016) Affordable Course Content and Open Educational Resources. [Online].
- Institute for College Access and Success. (2016) Student Debt; State by State Data. [Online]
- Open Textbook Network and Library. (2016) [Online]