



**Oregon State**  
**University**

**Oregon State Ecampus**  
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Honorable Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

I serve as the executive director of course development and learning innovation for Ecampus at Oregon State University. As an organization in a land grant institution, our mission is to improve access to educational opportunities. At Ecampus, we work to fulfill that mission by offering a wide variety of courses and degree programs, by continually improving the quality of the online learning experience, and by working to make education more affordable for students.

In 2013, to support efforts to make education more affordable, we created a new unit in our division to promote and support the use of open educational resources in online, hybrid, and traditional on-campus classes. Presently staffed by one director and four student workers with support from other Ecampus units, this unit helps faculty adopt, adapt, and author open textbooks and resources that are free for students to use.

Why focus on open educational resources (OER)? Because we understand that, in addition to concerns about tuition and fees, the high cost of textbooks is often a barrier for students. Providing access to free and low-cost course materials ultimately improves access to education and student success. With the availability of low- and no-cost course materials, students can more easily afford their educations, and all students, regardless of their ability to pay for expensive textbooks, have access to the same instructional resources. We also understand that the creation and adoption of these materials requires vision, coordination, systems, infrastructure, and support, and that this is important work with the power to change students' lives for the better.

Since the inception of our OER unit, we have raised awareness about OER, have helped countless faculty find open resources to use in their courses, and have helped faculty create 20 new open textbooks that are used by students in Oregon and around the world. We use Google Analytics to track the usage of eight of those textbooks, and in 2018, there were about 20,000 unique visitors to those eight books, with about 1 million page views.

Usage is increasing; we are on track for 2 million page views this year, just for those eight books alone.

In the last year, the OER unit has also worked closely with the OSU Beaver Store and Registrar's office to fulfill the important legislative mandate set forth in HB 2871 to create a process that helps students identify course sections that use low- or no-cost course materials at the point of registration. Thanks to the direction provided by the legislature, the collaboration amongst public institutions convened by Amy Hofer of the HECC, and the hard work of individuals from multiple offices within OSU, students at Oregon State can now use the schedule of classes when they are registering for a new term to search for course sections that use low- or no-cost course materials.

On March 1, 2019, a new director for the Oregon State Ecampus OER unit, Stefanie Buck, joined our division. Under Stefanie's leadership, we plan to continue supporting faculty in creating new open textbooks, to increase efforts in supporting faculty in adopting and adapting existing open texts, and to further develop assessment efforts to measure and report the positive financial impact for students. Most importantly, we want to work to increase the use of free and open educational materials to help more students afford and gain access to education.

I respectfully request that the committee support an increase in university funding to allow us to continue the important work of making education affordable for students.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shannon Riggs".

Shannon Riggs