

Announcement

Lumen Learning's Open Courses Offer Zero Textbook Cost Option for Many High-Demand College Courses

OER Services Provider Aims to Eliminate Commercial Textbooks in 50 Highest Enrollment College Courses

PORTLAND, Oregon (March 13, 2014) – As interest in open educational resources (OER) grows among educators and policy makers, [Lumen Learning](#) is publishing [open courses](#) that make it easier for faculty members to shift away from expensive commercial textbooks and instead teach using high quality OER. By the end of 2014, the company expects to publish open courses for 50 high-demand subjects, adding to the [15+ open courses](#) that are now freely available to the education community.

“It has become abundantly clear that simply creating open educational resources isn’t enough to spur widespread adoption,” said Kim Thanos, CEO and co-founder of Lumen Learning. “But when we collaborate with faculty members to curate and map OER to their learning objectives and then package it all as an online course, it takes instructors much further down the path toward successful adoption.”

High quality OER can be used to eliminate expensive commercial textbooks in many courses and instead offer students educational materials that are freely available in digital form. A [2014 report](#) from the Student PIRGs found that more than six in ten students have chosen not to buy a textbook due to cost. With the total cost of college textbooks averaging \$1200 per student annually, many students face the difficult choice of paying for textbooks versus paying for school – or other equally difficult financial trade-offs.

“The sad truth is that when students opt out of purchasing textbooks, they face serious obstacles to their success in the course and in college as well,” said David Wiley, chief academic officer and co-founder of Lumen Learning. “Too often, this means they have limited if any access to the course materials they need to succeed, and they have a hard time keeping up and mastering the material. In many cases, OER solves this problem.”

But in order for students to benefit from open educational resources, faculty members need to incorporate them into the courses they teach. Recognizing this dependency, Lumen Learning collaborates with faculty members across multiple

institutions to develop open courses that use only OER. These courses serve as frameworks instructors can use to adapt to their own teaching style, institutional learning objectives and student needs. For institutions seeking additional guidance and support for OER initiatives, Lumen Learning offers services including training, faculty professional development, content curation, licensing and attribution, and continuous course improvement to strengthen student success.

“There is no reason every student in a course like College Algebra needs to pay \$150 for a textbook, when high quality, free alternatives are available today,” said Wiley, a longtime open education advocate. “By publishing open courses for high demand, high enrollment subjects, we want to make ‘open’ a viable option for many more instructors and a reality for thousands more students every year, to the tune of millions of dollars in savings every semester.”

Available via [Lumen Learning’s website](#) today are 15+ courses in the following disciplines: Business, Mathematics, Life Science, Physical Science, Computing, Social and Behavioral Science, History, Humanities, Fine Arts, Composition, Communications, College Success and Developmental Education.

Instructors can access these courses using Canvas by Instructure, or they can export the courses into their institution’s own LMS system using a Common Cartridge file. The website also includes a [video tutorial](#) to orient instructors to the open course structure and how to use it.

About Lumen Learning

Lumen Learning provides sustained support for K-12 and higher education institutions to help them eliminate textbook costs, broaden access to educational materials and improve student success through the effective use of open-educational resources. Lumen’s OER Services help institutions transition high-enrollment courses to open content and provide training and support for faculty members to teach open courses and sustain the quality of these courses over time. Learn more at <http://www.lumenlearning.com>.

For More Information

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