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Show Me the Money! Students Save \$1.2 Million+ in Textbook Fees

By Plymouth State University - May 28, 2021



Nearly 30 percent of Plymouth State University students are considered low-income and many struggle to afford expensive textbooks. The University has achieved dramatic savings by being proactive in finding low- or no-cost alternatives, including Open Educational Resources (OER).

“PSU started participating in a USNH initiative in late 2015 designed to teach faculty to curate and create openly licensed texts in place of commercial

textbooks and has just completed a tracking database to accurately report on the savings,” says Director of the Open Learning & Teaching Collaborative (CoLab) Robin DeRosa. “We have saved students and their families \$1,254,919.65 so far and the pace is increasing as more faculty adopt OER.”

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CoLab Associate Director Martha Burtis took a conservative approach to wrangling the data, working with student collaborators to double-check exact course enrollments to achieve a high level of accuracy, and comparing the new lower cost of each course to the cost of the commercial books that was required before the faculty member made the switch.

“It’s pretty exciting to see the upward trend,” says Burtis. “The savings came out of a lot of people’s hard work and effort and we have tremendous evidence that it paid off .”

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“We encourage our students to think of knowledge as something you don’t just get for yourself but something you learn so that you can share.”

Director of Interdisciplinary Studies Matt Cheney