

# OER Public Relations Plan 2024



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## **Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats (SWOT)**

### **Strengths**

- Dedicated Leader
- Existing surveys to gain insight into faculty and students
- Five years of grants (\$60,000-\$75,000 a year from the state)
- Financial Incentives for faculty at multiple levels using state grant funds
  - Many MSU Denver faculty members have participated in at least some parts of this initiative
- Participation in national initiatives (Open Education Network, OpenStax focus group)
- MSU Denver has a history of involvement with the State of Colorado OER efforts
- Support from MSU Denver leaders
  - President Davidson publicly touts OER as a success
  - ~\$30,000 cash match for grant from Provost office
  - CLAS and College of Business Deans vocally support OER; CLAS helped support website development and staffing for course marking initiative
- OER Website
- Course marking initiative in place
- Support from Early Bird team to publish OER-themed articles
- Instructional designers work with faculty to consider OER and, if faculty are receptive, find and implement OER for courses (mostly online courses)

### **Weaknesses**

- Organization
- Time Management
- Non-existing resources
- Celebrations have been minimal
  - Yearly Roadrunners who Soar award
  - CTLD includes OER FLC participants in annual event
- Course marking initiative needs higher participation from faculty

### **Opportunities**

- Government Funding/Grants
- Learning opportunity stemming from other institutions implementations
- Enrollment increase by offering more affordable courses to low-income students
- Learning from competitors who focus on finding and funding OER materials
- MSU Denver OER Task Force members

### **Threats**

- Lack of resources
- STEM/Business classes lacking coursework OER
- Competing schools (ACC, CSU, CU) having better resources

## **SWOT Narratives**

<b>Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated Leader</li> <li>• Course Marking Initiatives</li> <li>• Financial Incentives</li> <li>• Support from The Early Bird</li> <li>• OER Taskforce</li> <li>• Website and Editorial Access</li> <li>• OER Course Creation (Spring '24)</li> </ul>	<b>Weaknesses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organization</li> <li>• Time Management</li> <li>• Low Faculty Participation</li> <li>• Website Accessibility and Organization for Target Audiences</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Funding and Grants</li> <li>• Enrollment Increase</li> <li>• Collaboration with Other Institutions</li> </ul>	<b>Threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of Resources</li> <li>• Direct Competition from CO Schools</li> <li>• State Funding Inconsistencies</li> </ul>

### **Narratives:**

### **Strengths:**

- Having a dedicated leader is key to the success of OER. Dr. Ragan is the authority and the liaison between the school and the state. With Dr. Ragan spearheading, MSU Denver has 5 years of existing data from students and faculty that give insight and analytical value to the school. She has procured five years of grants from the state, financial incentives for faculty to convert classes to using OER material, and she has gained the support of MSU Denver leaders, including President Davidson. Having support from the top has allowed Dr. Ragan to double her efforts and take a sabbatical to focus on campaigning for faculty to rework their lesson plans.

- The OER website is a strength to lead students down the path of discovering what exactly OER is and helps students achieve. Dr. Ragan has authority to make changes and edits that best serve OER.
- With course marking initiatives in place, faculty and students alike find it easier to gauge their upcoming schedules. The more faculty that marks their courses, the more students will know what to look for. These incentives will help launch OER to the next level
- With support from The Early Bird, Dr. Ragan has secured a strong ally in pushing out information about OER. Creating content about OER leads to more awareness which leads to more calls for action, more funding and more support. Using The Early Bird as a promotional tool, more students and faculty will become knowledgeable regarding OER.
- Using the taskforce that is already in place gives the OER program a head start on finding permanent members to take charge of implementation at MSU Denver. Having a dedicated organization of faculty to help streamline the process of making more courses accessible through OER usage year in and year out.

## **Weaknesses:**

**Organization, Time Management, Content** – These weaknesses are at the top because they affect all of the audiences. This is a summer task.

- The task force absolutely needs the calendar to go out in the summer and the winter so that they can stay on top of things like content management and events. Releasing a

calendar that covers the months from September to May is essential for staying up to date. The calendar should have a dedicated owner that can sync events to the devices of other taskforce members. If this is not feasible, then the calendar should be updated weekly based on needs and changes and email blasted to the task force.

- a) Faculty and FLC: Currently, faculty do not know the schedule and so cannot promote OER to their students. If they have this calendar, then they can devote some time in Q2 and Q4 to arrange materials for the upcoming registration periods. Ideally, they only need to arrange materials once with occasional updates. Faculty can also help promote content if they see it on the calendar. This helps faculty spread the word to students about OER.
- b) Students: The students are currently unaware of deadlines the calendar will provide – such as which courses are No Cost courses, which helps them better plan the amount they are spending in each semester.

- **Reviewing Data/Relationship management – FLC, Taskforce, Faculty:**

Currently, data is being gathered but has limited distribution. Knowing the data is crucial to keeping the OER program running, as it is necessary to assist Dr. Ragan in applying for grants and incentivize faculty to apply OER concepts in their courses. Providing the numbers and showing exactly how much students are saving on textbooks will give the university and the state the chance to continue investing resources into OER. I recommend the data be taken and analyzed in Q2 and Q4 around the census date of the



spring and fall semesters. Besides core classes, the taskforce must figure out the highest priority for OER resources.

- **Non-existing resources: Faculty, Department heads, Taskforce**

- a) Grants/funding- Q3. Grant requests are due in August. OER has funding for this year, but going forward there will be new proposals written every year. Taskforce will cover this and should be informed well in advance because of the calendar.
- b) Financial incentives for faculty (doing well on this, but it falls under resources, and it needs to be high priority for promoting OER to faculty.) Department heads and faculty on board will make this program achieve what it's setting out to do.

- **Course Marking initiatives needs higher participation: Faculty/Dept Heads, Students**

- a) Faculty should start marking courses for OER participation by February for the Summer and Fall semesters. This should be done again in September for the Spring courses.
- b) Students seeing courses marked for OER participation early can make their decisions when registration opens instead of risking loss of seat because of late sign up.

- **Website accessibility**

- a) The website is a good resource, however, as it currently exists, it is hard for students to find. Promoting the website should be a key goal for the student-led group conducting the OER PR planning project.

## **Opportunities:**

- Even though Dr. Ragan has secured grants and funding from the state already, there is an opportunity to get more. Using the data we will get this semester, we can show the impact that OER has on students, faculty, and the school which will encourage increased funding from the CO government. The OER Intern is working on a plan to increase engagement with OER which will lead to stronger data points and more opportunities for faculty to utilize OER.
- Enrollment numbers may not go up immediately, but they will increase a higher usage rate of OER materials due to affordability for students. Most textbook costs come from general education classes as everyone must take those courses. Finding OER material for gen-ed is key to increasing enrollment and attendance from low-income students. This is a high priority and Gen-Ed classes are currently the most important courses to find OER material for.
- There are several schools in CO who have done a great job implementing programs to support OER. MSU Denver has an opportunity to learn from these institutions and work together. Meetings with OER coordinators are in the process of being scheduled and puts the OER program in a good place to achieve its goals.

## **Threats**

- One big threat right now is the lack of resources for OER materials. Sources like OpenStax will help with this, but having few resources available makes faculty unwilling to make the switch. Faculty members do not want to use substandard materials to teach students. Creating or finding more resources will open avenues for faculty to change their lesson plan and focus on restructuring their courses around OER. The goal is to get faculty on board with making the switch, we do that by giving them proper material to work with.
- Another threat is direct competition from other Colorado schools. While MSU Denver has the advantage over community colleges simply because we are a four-year university, schools like CU, CSU, and UNC all have more resources and opportunities to create and distribute OER materials. Working with these schools would mitigate a lot of these issues, but there will always be a competitive element in academia. MSU Denver must use the taskforce to create and/or find material.
- The threat that looms large over the OER program is state funding. In 2023, MSU Denver received less funding than it did in 2022. With inconsistent funding, the OER program is

not able to rely on the incentives it gives to teachers, having an intern to help conduct research, and the inability to create new material for classes.

## Weakness Narratives and Timeliness

Weakness audience and quarter

- **Organization, Time Management, Content** – These weaknesses are at the top because they affect all of the audiences. This is a Q1 (JAN/FEB/MAR) task
  - 1) **Taskforce:** The task force absolutely needs the calendar to go out in Q1 and Q3 (JUL/AUG/SEP) so that they can stay on top of things like content management and events. Releasing a calendar that covers the months in Q1 and Q2 (APR/MAY/JUNE) is essential for staying up to date. The calendar should have a dedicated owner that can sync events to the devices of other taskforce members. If this is not feasible, then the calendar should be updated weekly based on needs and changes and email blasted to the task force.
  - 2) **Faculty and FLC:** Having faculty know the schedule helps them promote OER to students. If they have this calendar, then they can devote some time in Q2 and Q4 (OCT/NOV/DEC) to arrange materials for the upcoming registration periods. Ideally, they only need to arrange materials once with occasional updates. Faculty can also help promote content if they see it on the calendar. This helps faculty spread the word to students about OER.
  - 3) **Students:** The students are affected by the organization because the task force needs to meet their needs by hitting the deadlines provided by the calendar.
- **Reviewing Data/Relationship management** – FLC, Taskforce, Faculty:
  - 1) **Taskforce:** Knowing the data is crucial to keeping the OER program up and running. Providing the numbers and showing exactly how much students are saving on textbooks will give the university and the state the chance to continue investing resources into OER. I recommend the data be taken and analyzed in Q2 and Q4 around the census date of the spring and fall semesters. Besides core classes, the taskforce must figure out the highest priority for OER resources.
  - 2) **FLC/Faculty:** This is important to faculty and department heads so they know when the taskforce will be collecting data and can streamline the process by turning in accurate data to the university or whoever collects the data.

- **Non-existing resources: Faculty, Department heads, Taskforce**
  - 1) **Grants/funding- Q3. Grant requests are due in August. OER has funding for this year, but going forward there will be new proposals written every year. Taskforce will cover this and should be informed well in advance because of the calendar.**
  - 2) **Financial incentives for faculty (doing well on this, but it falls under resources, and it needs to be high priority for promoting OER to faculty. Department heads and faculty on board will make this program achieve what it's setting out to do.**
  
- **Course Marking initiatives needs higher participation: Faculty/Dept Heads, Students (Q2)**
  - 1) **Faculty should start marking courses for OER participation by February for the Summer and Fall semesters. This should be done again in September for the Spring courses.**
  - 2) **Students seeing courses marked for OER participation early can make their decisions when registration opens instead of risking loss of seat because of late sign up.**

## Calendar

### January:

- Preparation for course marking for summer, fall
  - Review the Qualtrics survey, make any needed updates
  - Check the "Class Schedule Refresh from Banner Schedule" at <https://msudenver.sharepoint.com/sites/DepartmentClassSchedule>
  - Only add ZNCM and ZLCM attributes after that refresh date but note that schedule becomes available to students about 1 week after refresh date
- Nomination for Roadrunners Who Soar Award
- Publicize the trainings for the semester ([Trumba calendar](#); Early Bird; add to website; other?)
  - Open Textbook Review workshops
  - OER FLC
  - \$750 OER adoption grants
  - Others?
- Taskforce distributes calendar to all departments with key dates and events?
- Plan or continue planning for any Open Education Week events (1<sup>st</sup> week of March)
- State OER Council Meetings (one Friday a month); may include OER grant review
- OER task force meeting
- End of Jan: Begin sending reminders to faculty members to start course marking for summer and fall

### February:

- Start adding Summer course attributes (Summer class scheduler refresh was Mon. Feb. 6 in 2023)

- Invite faculty using OER to use a survey to gather information from their students at the end of the semester
- Review MSU Denver \$750 OER adoption grants
- Notify applicants for \$750 OER adoption grants
- Apply to present at state OER conference, if desired
- State OER Council Meetings (one Friday a month); may include OER grant review
- OER task force meeting

### March:

- Reminder to faculty to fill out fall course marking survey
- Start adding Fall course attributes (Fall class scheduler refresh was Mar. 6 in 2023)
- Open Education week is the first week of March: hold event(s)?
- Hold a second open textbook review workshop?
- Set up payments for faculty participating in January OER textbook review
- Verify paperwork completed and set up payments for February OER adoption
- State OER Council Meetings (one Friday a month)
- OER task force meeting

### April:

- Reach out to advisors about student orientation and sharing information about no and low cost courses
- Set up payments for faculty participating in OER FLC and others as needed
- State OER Council Meetings (one Friday a month)
- OER task force meeting

### May:

- Students in OER courses fill out surveys about their experiences
- End-of- semester celebration (ex. CTLD)
- State OER conference
- State OER Council Meetings (one Friday a month)
- OER task force meeting – last meeting for school year

### June:

- Gather and analyze data for state OER grant reporting
- State OER Council Meetings (one Friday a month)

- Advisors running student orientation sessions

## July:

- Finalize state OER grant report
- Schedule trainings for the upcoming semester (Open Textbook Review; OER FLC; Other?)
- Publicize the trainings for the semester (Trumba calendar; Early Bird; add to website; other?)
- Advisors running student orientation sessions

## August:

- State OER Grant report due (August 1)
- Promote OER learning opportunities for faculty with financial incentives
- Review eligibility for potential OER/Z degree programs
- Schedule monthly OER task force meetings
- Recruit more OER task force members as needed
- Hold first OER task force meeting of the school year
- Lead an open textbook review workshop
- First OER FLC session
- State OER Council Meetings (one Friday a month)

## September:

- Review MSU Denver \$750 OER adoption grant applications
- Notify applicants for \$750 OER adoption grants
- Set up grant writing team for state OER grant
- Send out faculty OER awareness survey
  - Follow up with faculty who requested more information
- Two OER FLC sessions
- OER task force meeting
  - Create subgroups for needed activities (adoption grant review, grant writing, celebration planning, etc.)
- State OER Council Meetings (one Friday a month)
- End of month: begin sending reminders to faculty members to start course marking for spring semester
- Plan date and schedule room for end of semester OER celebration

## October:

- Preparation for course marking for spring



- Review the Qualtrics survey, make any needed updates
- Check the “Class Schedule Refresh from Banner Schedule” at <https://msudenver.sharepoint.com/sites/DepartmentClassSchedule>
- Only add ZNCM and ZLCM attributes after that refresh date! (For spring 2024 was Oct. 9, 2023)
- Send emails with custom Qualtrics links to faculty about course marking
- Send thank you emails to faculty who have used the course marking!
- Invite faculty and key administrators and staff to end of semester OER celebration
- Review data on high enrollment courses and adjust needs for resource allocation
- OER State Grant writing multiple meetings!
  - planning the project(s),
  - identifying possible partners
  - meeting with faculty/department partners
- OER State Grant writing: attend meetings/trainings
- End of month: Check MSU Denver course marking: reach out to faculty teaching high-enrollment, known OER courses if not marked as expected
- Two OER FLC sessions
- Lead a second open textbook review workshop
- OER task force meeting
- State OER Council Meetings (one Friday a month)
- Analyze faculty survey data from previous month
- Set up payments for faculty participating in August OER textbook review
- Verify paperwork completed and set up payments for faculty Sept. adoption

## November:

- OER State Grant writing: preliminary budget, clear vision
- Send thank you emails to faculty who have used the course marking!
- One OER FLC session
- OER task force meeting
- State OER Council Meetings (one Friday a month)

## December:

- Final OER FLC session
- Set up payments for faculty participating in OER FLC and others as needed
- End-of-semester celebration
- Finalize and submit state OER grant (Dec. 18, 2023)
- Schedule trainings for the upcoming semester (Open Textbook Review; OER FLC; Other?)

- Coordinate with any co-presenters or co-facilitators
- Schedule monthly OER task force meetings for Spring
- Planning for any Open Education Week events (first week of March)
- OER task force meeting
- State OER Council Meetings (one Friday a month)

Celebration Planning	Course Marking	Payments for OER participants	OER Task Force and Council Meetings	OER FLC Sessions

## Calendar Narratives

### January:

All events requiring research, planning, training and review must take place at the start of the calendar year. Doing this lays the foundation for the rest of the year. The task force must constantly evaluate what is and is not working and make different changes based on what they see in real time. The first taskforce meeting will take place in January along with State OER council meetings with subsequent meetings scheduled for each month during the semester.

Course Marking Preparation starts in January for summer and fall courses. One step is to review the course marking survey sent to the faculty. Doing this allows the OER taskforce to make any

necessary updates before registration opens. Once the survey is finalized, publicize in the Early Bird, email individual faculty through Qualtrics, and ask the provost Office to send an email about it to all MSU Denver faculty. Check the 'Class Schedule Refresh from Banner Schedule' to identify the date of the refresh. Remind Vince Werner in CLAS Dean's office, Katie Senga in Chemistry, and any other department leads who add attributes, to start adding the attributes after the refresh date.

The\_OER training classes for the spring semester can be publicized through the [Trumba calendar](#), Earlybird and faculty emails. The information sent out about the training includes open textbook review workshops, the OER faculty learning committee agenda and OER adoption grants.

The planning or continuation of planning for all OER events should happen now. The first week of March is OER week\_and to raise awareness of OER, the taskforce, FLC, and anyone involved in OER should partake in planning of events around campus.

At the end of the month, the OER team should begin sending reminders to faculty to complete their course markings for summer and fall courses. The reminders must be constant as faculty is usually working overtime and something like this may slip their mind.

Nominations for Roadrunners who SOAR need to take place to recognize those who have served the OER community and bring recognition to the program.

## **February:**

In February, the taskforce should build and invite faculty to use a survey tailored to students to gather information at the end of the semester. [This survey would show](#) how effective the OER materials in class were for the students, if the students signed up for the class specifically because it was low cost or no cost, and if the student plans to find courses based on cost in future semesters.

This month should also include adoption grant meetings. Faculty can submit OER courses for grant approval, resulting in a \$750.00 stipend. These applications will be reviewed, and all applicants will be notified of their submission status. These can be reviewed in the MSU Denver OER task force meetings if necessary.

### **March:**

OER Week is the first week of March. Events revolving around OER awareness should be taking place every day. Some ideas are:

- Taking over the MSU Denver Instagram account with different social media posts,
- Holding refreshers with snacks in high traffic areas with infographic material for students,
- Short speeches from OER advocates
- Taking over the digital boards in each department with a QR code to the OER website.

Another [reminder needs to be sent to faculty around March 6th](#) to mark their summer and fall courses with a refresher course on open textbook review happening in the first week of March. This course can align with OER week.

All payments to faculty for OER adoption should be finalized this month to make sure we are rewarding the faculty who have put in the work.

### **April:**

Reaching out to advisors to share information to students during the registration period to help students understand all their low/no cost options.

Faculty must participate all semester long as part of FLC to receive payment

**May:**

Surveys should be given to students who participated in OER classes so the taskforce can receive feedback on what went well and what could be done better.

The end of the semester celebration should occur around the first week of May to celebrate everything the OER taskforce and FLC has accomplished throughout the semester.

**June:**

The data from all reported OER findings should be gathered and analyzed to prepare for the OER Grant due on August 1st.

The advisors should be prepped on OER for upcoming student orientation sessions to make incoming students aware of what OER does and how to look for it.

**July:**

Because the state grant report is due on the first of August, this month should focus on making sure it is ready to be submitted.

All OER training and workshops should be scheduled to allow faculty to have enough time to adjust their schedules.

**August:**

Submitting the state grant report on time is imperative to securing OER funding for the school. Without this, the incentives to adopt OER will not exist.

OER taskforce meetings should be scheduled for the fall semester and the first meeting should include upcoming tasks and deciding on the amount of people needed to complete them. If more members are required for the taskforce, it should be discussed at this meeting.

The first open textbook review workshop should take place this month as faculty begins assembling potential OER courses or Z degrees for the following school year. The earlier these begin, the more likely they can be included in the yearly grant request.

**September:**

This month should include adoption grant meetings. Faculty can submit OER courses for grant approval, resulting in a \$750.00 stipend. These applications will be reviewed, and all applicants will be notified of their submission status. These can be reviewed in the State OER Council meetings if necessary.

The grant writing team should be assembled this month after faculty has had a chance to review the requirements that allow a course to be labeled as low cost/no cost or fit in with a Z degree program. Selection and/or delegation can be made during the OER taskforce meeting.

An OER awareness survey can be sent to faculty to compare the data from previous surveys and gain perspective on the OER program's growth.

Begin celebration planning for an end of semester event to focus on what OER has achieved thus far. This includes selecting a time and date, location, choosing speakers and managing refreshments.

Faculty should start receiving notifications and reminders about course marking for the upcoming semester. With a head start on course marking, MSU Denver registrations can accurately label classes as low/no cost.

**October:**

In October, the preparation for course marking needs to start, this includes; reviewing the survey sent out to faculty to make any necessary changes and analyze the data from the answers given, checking the 'Class Schedule Refresh from Banner Schedule' to ensure all courses are labeled correctly, and adding the zero cost or low cost markings to courses after the refresh date (usually around October 9<sup>th</sup>).

Emails should be sent with custom Qualtrics links for course marking to all faculty members. Additionally, the course marking will be publicized through the Early Bird and Provost Communications emails to all faculty members with a generic link.

At this time, the data needs to be reviewed on high enrollment courses to make sure the OER resources are allocated to the areas of highest needs.

The OER State Grant writing team needs to have multiple meetings to plan the projects, identify department partners, and set meetings with faculty and department partners. The team should also need to attend meetings and training that covers OER so they can write the grant correctly ensuring MSU Denver is allocated every resource possible.

Course marking must be reviewed to see if there are discrepancies in expected OER classes not marked as such.

Two OER FLC meetings should take place during this month to stay on top of everything happening this month.

Another textbook review workshop should happen this month to keep pushing knowledge about OER to faculty.

Faculty data from the survey sent out should be reviewed at the end of the month.

Thank you letters should be sent to all faculty participating in OER to encourage and remind them how thankful we are for adopting OER.

Invitations need to go out to key administrators and staff for the end of the semester celebration to ensure they have time to adjust their schedules.

Payments should go out to all members of faculty who participated in the August textbook review.

Paperwork needs to be verified and payments need to go out to all faculty who completed the September adoption so that faculty gets rewarded for their participation.

### **November:**

The OER State Grant reporting team needs to meet to discuss the preliminary budget and ensure there is a sharp vision for the following years grant request. This sets up a message architecture that the team can refer to make sure they stay on track.



Thank you emails need to be sent to faculty who participated in the course marking to make sure they know we appreciate them helping our program grow.

**December:**

Payments for OER FLC members need to be set up and disbursed.

The end-of-semester celebration should take place in the first week of December to celebrate faculty and administrators that have supported the OER program.

The state OER grant should be finalized and submitted around the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of December (2023 it was on Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>) to ensure MSU Denver is afforded all the applicable benefits.

Training pertaining to OER needs to be scheduled for the upcoming semester and sent out to faculty so they can ensure they have enough time to sign up.

The monthly OER taskforce meetings need to be scheduled for the upcoming semester so the team can agree on a meeting time in the spring semester.

Planning for Open Education week should begin so that we allow enough time for campus activities to be scheduled in March.

**Each month will include an OER taskforce meeting, a state OER meeting, and may include up to two OER FLC meetings. This needs to happen to keep the teams on track and share information learned throughout the semester.**

## **Meeting Summaries**

### **Meeting Summaries of 10/12 and 10/13**

On Oct. 12<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Ragan and I had the pleasure of meeting Mitch Cota, a reference and OER librarian at Arapahoe Community College. Mitch also serves on the State OER Taskforce. Mitch has done an amazing job at ACC implementing OER, and Dr. Ragan and I wanted to pick his brain so that we can emulate that here at MSU Denver.

Mitch informed us how he became involved in OER and how it takes much more than a committee, schools need a dedicated OER person with OER being their focus. After spending a lot of time as a reference librarian and calling for more help in OER, Mitch decided to just take over for the school. Mitch spends about 20% of his time doing work for the OER program at ACC.

He spoke to us about the strategy that ACC uses to promote OER and make students more aware. He likes to set up events in high traffic areas with food and infographics, making sure the students who stop by leave with new knowledge. Mitch said this helps enrollment numbers for OER classes and puts a little bit of pressure on classes who are not using OER. He also suggested spending as much time with the faculty as necessary to figure out what might be holding them back from converting to OER. One of the common themes was lack of time, so Mitch suggested having a full time OER person to build master shells for classes that can be handed over to faculty is useful. However, it's not always feasible as some classes are restricted by licensing issues.

Mitch said that every step forward regarding OER is a success. If there are concentrated efforts to continue building, OER will not be going anywhere. He also spoke of working with faculty. Mitch said that he used to come off too strongly and has since learned to change his tone to be more helpful when speaking with people so as not to dissuade them from using OER materials.

Above all else, Mitch implored that we celebrate successes and make sure we have fun. The path to OER and Z degrees is long and windy, but every bit of implementation is rewarding.

## **Meeting with OER FLC 10/13**

On October 13<sup>th</sup>, I had the pleasure of joining the OER Faculty Learning Committee meeting to speak with the members who make up the team. Brian, Felix, Anne, Jessica and Carolyn told me their stories and how they became involved in OER and what they are doing now to make it happen for MSU Denver in their respective departments.

Jessica works in the nutrition department. She was a low-income and first-generation student. These two things made her invest heavily into OER to give more people with similar backgrounds a better chance to succeed in college. She says there are a lot of barriers to OER, and that compensation and time are major factors as to why faculty are hesitant to revamp their courses.

Brian Healy from the communications department said he was lucky to come into a program where OER materials already existed, and he has been able to build upon them. To him, the biggest barriers are dealing with faculty who are averse to change.

Anne works in the Art Department. She uses Khan Academy and Smart History to supplement her classes with OER material. Her biggest barriers are lack of compensation and limited selection of content.

Felix works in the business and marketing department. He is a huge proponent of OER after being tricked into using it when redesigning his courses. Though he says that it is easy for him to implement, it is harder to use OER for a master shell due to updated standards and accreditation. Some of the

textbook companies that OER must compete with offer things like automated homework grading,

- lifetime access, constant updates and fresh content. The amount of time it would take for faculty to match that is unheard of, specifically when the common barrier is limited time already.

Carolyn teaches business at Community College of Denver (CCD). She and the other members of her department are working on standardizing an intro to business class so that the same thing can be taught by all faculty. She feels that if every professor is using the same content, then it is easier to compare statistics from class to class. Carolyn says they are currently using OpenStax, and before they used Lumen, but even the \$25.00 charge that came with that was a barrier to some students. A barrier for her is time, but she is slowly building a course that she can sustain using OER.

