Mason Publishing extends University Libraries publishing expertise

- Mason Libraries initiated copyright office, digital repository, ETDs, open access journals, and data services over past decade
- George Mason University Press transferred to the Library in 2013
- Provost endorsed initiative in Fall 2013
- Provided catalyst to launch a multifaceted publishing program for the University in 2014
MASON PUBLISHING STRATEGY IS FOCUSED ON ADDING VALUE TO THE MASON COMMUNITY

• Align with George Mason University’s strategic plan, strengths, and mission
• Assist faculty in creation of course materials including workbooks, textbooks, OERs
• Integrate digital opportunities throughout Mason Publishing Group and University Press
• Engage with key academic centers, departments, administrative units
OER goal is to reduce costs to students and improve learning outcomes.
OER defined broadly

- Materials for teaching, learning, and research that may be freely used and re-purposed by others
- Reside in the public domain or released under Creative Commons licenses that permit reuse
  - retain, reuse, revise, remix, and redistribute
- Includes textbooks, streaming videos, course materials, modules, tests, software, tools or techniques, materials, and even full courses
OER development a priority for University Libraries and Mason Publishing

- Mason Publishing assists instructors in developing OERs and other educational materials (workbooks, textbooks)
- Subject librarians assist instructors with discovery of OERs
- Complements but does not replace existing “Text Select” initiative for print course reserves
- Data from Text Select used to identify courses with high enrollment and high textbook costs
OER pilot encourages use in innovative course redesign

• The University Library partnered in 2016 with Mason 4-VA and the Office of Digital Learning to introduce pilot project mini grants

• Grants of $1,000 to $5,000 offered to incentivize OER use or creation

• RFP prioritized courses that:
  1. Have high enrollment,
  2. Are required for majors,
  3. Count in the Mason Core, or
  4. Carry high textbook costs
OER Pilot announced at faculty workshop

“Creating a Dynamic Classroom Experience Using Open Educational Resources”

• Faculty from Virginia Community College System—a nationally recognized leader in using and building OERs—and University Libraries

• Workshop topics:
  • Why OER and defining OER terms and concepts
  • Finding and Evaluating OER and free course materials
  • Building an OER Course
  • Understanding Creative Commons Licenses and applying them to your own course materials
  • Evaluating quality and effectiveness of OER materials in course
  • OER and student success and retention
**Peer Review Rubric**

- **Project Summary**: Initiatives covered
- **Addresses proposal criteria:**
  1. high enrollment
  2. required for major
  3. Mason Core class
  4. high textbook cost
- **Proposed plan can achieve overall goals**
- **Timeline for developing, implementing and assessing project**
- **Overall quality of proposal**
RESULTS OF FIRST PILOT PROMISING

• Eleven grants awarded (a few for multiple courses)
• Subjects included health, research methods, foreign language (Spanish), English composition, chemistry, astronomy, intro course for international students, history, environmental policy, engineering
• Course enrollment ranged from ~85 students per semester to ~2,750 students per semester in multiple sections (average ~435)
• Timeline for implementing project varied considerably
• Four teams have indicated interest in working with Mason Publishing to develop a textbook or online publishing project, but none have yet been delivered
OER rfp for course redesign reprised in 2017-2018

- Continues partnership between University Library partnered, Mason 4-VA, and Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning
- Competitive grants again to range from $1000-$5000
- Larger amounts will be considered for projects that develop original materials (encouraging new textbooks or other materials)
- RFP continues to prioritizes courses with:
  1. Have high enrollment,
  2. Are required for majors,
  3. Count in the Mason Core, or
  4. Carry high textbook costs
Opportunities also emerge from other sources

- Mason Publishing collaborating with faculty member to publish OER textbook—not part of OER pilot
- Project includes Textbook and Teacher’s Manual
- Required course for certification as Virginia Court Mediation
- Project to be published as print-on-demand textbook and open-access ebook
Mason Publishing and the Open Textbook Initiative
Open Textbook Network Initiative is a Commonwealth-wide effort

- VIVA, one of only four consortial members currently in the OTN
- Four system leaders & 35 campus leaders selected
- Training provided by OTN in MN & VA
- Workshops offered by leaders @ their institutions
- Stipends provided to faculty for attending AND submitting an open textbook review to the Open Textbook Library (OTL)
OTN METHODOLOGY FOCUSES ON REVIEWS LEADING TOWARD TEXT ADOPTION

• Workshop attendees are encouraged to select an open textbook from the OTL when registering.
• Workshop attendees are invited to review this title to receive a stipend ($200 or more).
• Reviews important for assessment of quality by those in discipline.
• Stipends acknowledge work & encourage adoption.
OTL OPEN TEXTBOOK CRITERIA

• Openly licensed to allow derivatives,
• Complete textbook,
• Available in a downloadable format,
• In use at multiple HE institutions, or affiliated with a HE institution, scholarly society, or professional organization, and
• An original textbook or is for an entirely new audience

Know a good title? Share it!
ADOPTION IS THE GOAL

• Success is measured by adoption
• Statistics gathered 2x/yr on enrollment in a course that uses OTs, which are reported to OTN
• Student savings calculated by multiplying course enrollment \( \times \$100 \)
  • Course with 50 students whose instructor uses an open textbook has a reduced cost of \( \sim \$5,000 \).
  • Weighted formula allows data to be compared across institutions.
OER Metafinder—One-Stop Searchbox

- Working with Deep Web Technologies, George Mason University Libraries has created an OER Metafinder.
- Faculty and students can use this system to search across a number of sites that offer open educational resources.
- System returns first ~100 hits from each source, de-duping as items are retrieved.
- Checkbox allows users to include or exclude sources from a search.
- See: https://library.gmu.edu/OERmetafinder
Sources queried in the OER Metafinder

American Memory (Library of Congress)
AMSER - Applied Math and Science Education Repository
BC Campus: Open Ed College Open Textbooks
Digital Public Library of America
Directory of Open Access Books (DOAB)

HathiTrust - Public Domain Texts
Merlot.org
MIT OpenCourseware
OAOpen.org
OER Commons
OERs at Internet Archive
Open Textbook Library
OpenStax CNX
Project Gutenberg
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