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**Colorado Commission on Higher Education approves \$550,000 in OER grant funding**

DENVER – Feb. 7, 2019: The Colorado Commission on Higher Education approved 20 proposals that will provide nearly \$550,000 in funding for higher education Open Educational Resources (OER) projects throughout the state.

“I applaud the work of the commission to bolster innovation and save our students money,” said Governor Jared Polis. “These grants will no doubt have a huge impact on the future of OER and inspire other higher education institutions in the state to follow suit with creative and impactful solutions.”

In its inaugural year, the [Colorado OER Grant Program](#) is awarding funds to several institutions in two different tiers: individual and small group; and faculty- and institutional-level grants. Funded proposals include a systemwide intercampus collaboration and faculty content design in disciplines with high enrollment and expensive textbook costs, ranging from STEM and art history to English language and writing courses. [View the list of awards.](#)

“There is limitless potential when it comes to [Open Educational Resources](#),” said Commissioner Pardis Mahdavi. “We know from national data that adoption and implementation of OER can positively impact both affordability and student success. Colorado is well-positioned to make a great push forward in this arena to lead innovative practices in education.”

OER are high-quality teaching, learning and research resources that permit free use or repurposing and legally available to students for free or very low cost. Championed by the General Assembly last year, [H.B. 18-1331](#) established the grant program and charged Colorado’s OER Council to review and administer the proposals.

“I’m proud that Colorado is a leader in this important work and we have the support and encouragement of our Governor and Commission,” said Dr. Angie Paccione, executive director of CDHE. “By removing one of the obstacles in the path of traditionally underrepresented students, we set a level playing field and get to the heart of our work—seeing everyone succeed after high school.”

“As a faculty member, I am often frustrated that economic or other large-scale factors build obstacles in my students’ path to success,” said Dr. Jonathan Poritz, associate professor in the Department of Mathematics and Physics at CSU-Pueblo and chair of the statewide OER Council. “OER enables and even encourages me to use better teaching approaches, to keep my courses more interactive and up-to-date and to use technology that empowers and engages students rather than controls and surveils them.”

With \$1 million slated for next year’s grant cycle, Colorado’s OER Council is eager to support more projects that will lower costs and improve student success—two goals outlined in CDHE’s statewide plan for higher education, [Colorado Rises](#).

**Get Involved**

In conjunction with CDHE, the OER Council will host events and other professional development opportunities to learn more about the open education movement in Colorado. During [Open Education Week 2019](#), March 4-8,

CDHE will partner with campuses to put on interactive webinars, panels and more. Campuses are encouraged to host associated events and contact [OER@dhe.state.co.us](mailto:OER@dhe.state.co.us) for potential collaboration.

In May, CDHE will host the first-ever [Statewide OER Conference](#) at the Colorado Community College System Lowry Campus. This conference will feature national and local experts exploring topics in the open education movement at various levels. This conference will be preceded by a pre-conference training with the [Open Textbook Network](#).

#### **About the Colorado OER Council**

The Colorado OER Council is a dynamic 15-member delegation designated by the executive director of CDHE. Members include experts from various disciplines such as faculty, instructional designers, digital experts, institutional administrators, state staffers and a student representative.

#### **About the Colorado Department of Higher Education**

Working with the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, we advocate, develop policies and support students to maximize higher education opportunities for all. The Department believes every Coloradan should have an education beyond high school to pursue their dreams and improve our communities. Read the CDHE master plan [Colorado Rises](#).

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